

Rhode Island
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services

STATE PLAN
for
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

2001 – 2006
Raymond A. Carroll



**STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

STATE: **Rhode Island**

AGENCY: **Office of Rehabilitation Services**

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL BLIND COMBINED

SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS AND STATE CERTIFICATIONS

- 1.1 The **Office of Rehabilitation Services** (name of designated State agency or designated State unit) is authorized to submit this State plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.²
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I, part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **Department of Human Services** (name of the designated State agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of this State plan.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State plan.
- 1.4 The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding this State plan and its supplement.
- 1.5 The State legally may carry out each provision of the State plan and its supplement.
- 1.6 All provisions of the State plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
- 1.7 The **Director, Department of Human Services** (title of State officer) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under this State plan and its supplement.

- 1.8 The Director, Department of Human Services (title of State officer) has the authority to submit this State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State plan supplement for supported employment services.
- 1.9 The agency that submits this State plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
- 1.10 The effective date of this State plan and its supplement is October 1, 2000.

(Signature)

Christine C. Ferguson
(Typed Name of Signatory)

(Date)

Director
(Title)

¹ Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.

⁵ Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR part 361.

⁶ No funds under title VI, part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the title I State plan in accordance with section 625(a) of the Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR part 361, and 34 CFR part 363.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.20(a)(1) and (2), (b), and (d), and 363.11(g)(9))

- (a) The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program carried out under section 112 of the Act, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures.
- (b) The designated State agency provides adequate notice of the meetings in accordance with State law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of such State law, in accordance with procedures developed by the State agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

2.2 State review process. (34 CFR Part 79)

If the State plan, its supplement, or amendment to the State plan is subject to the State review process, such materials are reviewed and commented on in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, and comments provided by the State review process are transmitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

This State plan and its supplement are subject to the State review process.

Yes No X

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

- 3.1 Submittal of the State plan, its supplement, and revisions to the plan and its supplement.** (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act)
- (a) The State submits to the Commissioner a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services that meets the requirements of section 101 of the Act and a State plan supplement for supported employment services that meets the requirements of section 625 of the Act on the same date that the State submits a State plan under section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
 - (b) If the State submits a State unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that includes the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services in the unified plan, the State submits to the Commissioner the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services on the same date that the State submits its unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
 - (c) The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
 - (d) The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
 - (1) comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - (2) assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - (3) innovation and expansion activities; and
 - (4) requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act.
 - (e) The State plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State plan or plan supplement.

3.2 Supported employment plan. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN

4.1 Designated State agency and designated State unit. (Sections 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13)

(a) Designated State agency.

- (1) There is a State agency designated as the sole State agency to administer the State plan, or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the State by a sole local agency.
- (2) The designated State agency is:
 - X primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or
 - _____ not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities.
- (3) In American Samoa, the designated State agency is the Governor.

(b) Designated State unit.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (1) If the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, the State agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that:
- (A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency's vocational rehabilitation program, including those responsibilities specified in subparagraph (5) of this paragraph of the State plan;
 - (B) has a full-time director;
 - (C) has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit;
 - (D) is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated State agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated State agency; and
 - (E) at a minimum, has the following responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other agency or individual:
 - (i) all decisions affecting eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of services;
 - (ii) a determination that an individual has ended participation in the vocational rehabilitation program and achieved an employment outcome after receiving vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (iii) policy formulation and implementation; and
 - (iv) allocation and expenditure of vocational rehabilitation funds.
- (2) The name of the designated State unit is Office of Rehabilitation Services .

4.2 State independent commission or state rehabilitation council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

The State plan must contain one of the following two assurances.

(a) ___ The designated State agency is an independent commission that:

- (1) is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State;
- (2) is consumer-controlled by persons who:
 - (A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
 - (B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;
- (3) includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and
- (4) undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act;

or

(b) X The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit:

- (1) jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, consistent with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act and section 4.12 of this State plan;
- (2) regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (3) includes in the State plan and in any revision to the State plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
- (4) transmits to the Council:
 - (A) all plans, reports, and other information required under title I of the Act to be submitted to the Secretary;
 - (B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State plan; and
 - (C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under title I of the Act, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.
- (c) *If the designated State unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c)* provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this subsection of the State plan, the response of the designated State unit to the input and recommendations, and explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the state plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21(a))

The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (d) the Director of the client assistance program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

4.4 Non-federal share. (Section 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60(b))

The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out this State plan is 21.3 percentum and it is provided through the financial participation by the State, or if the State elects, by the State and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.15)

- (a) The State plan provides for local administration and each local agency is under the supervision of the designated State unit and is the sole local agency responsible for the administration of the program within the political subdivision that it serves.

Yes ___ No X

- (b) *IF YES, Attachment 4.5* identifies each local agency and describes the methods each local agency uses to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with this State plan.

4.6 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Sections 101(a)(2)(A) and (4)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25 and .26)

The State plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except in the case when:

- (a) The State unit is providing services in one or more political subdivisions of the State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State plan and the:
 - (1) non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual; and
 - (2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(3) If the State is providing services that meet the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this subsection, **Attachment 4.6(a)(3)** requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26(b); or

(b) Earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas within the State contingent on the State notifying the Commissioner that it cannot provide the full non-Federal share without the use of such earmarked funds.

4.7 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

(a) The designated State agency is carrying out a joint program involving shared funding and administrative responsibility with another State agency or a local public agency to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Yes ___ No X

(b) *IF YES*, **Attachment 4.7(b)** describes the:

(1) nature and scope of the joint program;

(2) services to be provided;

(3) respective roles of each participating agency in the provision of services and their administration; and

(4) share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

(c) If the joint program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan subsection.

4.8 Third-party cooperative arrangements involving funds from other public agencies (Section 12 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.28)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (a) The designated State unit has entered into a third-party cooperative arrangement for providing or administering vocational rehabilitation services with another State agency or a local public agency that is furnishing part or all of the non-Federal share.

Yes X No__

- (b) *IF YES:*

- (1) The services provided by the cooperating agency are not the customary or typical services provided by that agency but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or are existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded, or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus.
- (2) The services provided by the cooperating agency are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from the designated State unit.
- (3) Program expenditures and staff providing services under the cooperative arrangement are under the administrative supervision of the designated State unit.
- (4) All State plan requirements, including the State's order of selection, if an order is in effect, apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.
- (c) If the third-party cooperative program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan.

4.9 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23 and .24)

- (a) **Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment systems.**

The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(b) Replication of cooperative agreements.

The designated State agency replicates the cooperative agreement identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of the State plan at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

(c) Interagency cooperation with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.9(c) describes the:

- (1)** interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;
- (2)** coordination, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 4.9(d) of this subsection, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
- (3)** manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.6(b) of the State plan; and,
- (4)** efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the requirements of subsection 7.5 of the supplement to this State plan.

(d) Coordination with education officials.

Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan are described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(2)** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:

- (1) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (2) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (3) the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (4) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.
- (e) **Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.**

The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

- (f) **Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.**

- (1) There is in the State a recipient(s) of a grant under part C of title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near Federal and State reservations.

Yes ___ No X

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (2) *IF YES*, the designated State agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement with each grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of title I of the Act. The agreement(s) describes strategies for collaboration and coordination in providing vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities, including:
- (A) strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;
 - (B) procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and who are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (C) provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

(g) **Reciprocal referral services with a separate agency for individuals who are blind.**

In those States in which there is a separate designated State unit for individuals who are blind and also a designated State unit for all other individuals with disabilities, the two State units:

- (1) have established reciprocal referral services;
- (2) use each other's services and facilities to the extent feasible;
- (3) jointly plan activities to improve services in the State for individuals with multiple impairments, including visual impairments; and
- (4) otherwise cooperate to provide more effective services, including, if appropriate, entering into a written cooperative agreement.

4.10 Methods of administration. (Sections 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (c))

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(a) **General.**

The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of this State plan.

(b) **Employment of individuals with disabilities.**

The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in section 503 of the Act.

(c) **Written standards for providers of services.**

The designated State agency has established, maintains, makes available to the public, and implements written minimum standards for the various types of providers used by the designated State unit in providing vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan.

(d) **Facilities.**

Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4.11 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

- (a) The designated State agency has implemented a comprehensive system of personnel development that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(7) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.18.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (b) **Attachment 4.11(b)** describes the designated State agency's policies, procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit. The description addresses the following requirements:
- (1) collection and analysis on an annual basis of data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.18(a);
 - (2) plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel who are individuals with disabilities;
 - (3) establishment and maintenance of personnel standards meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that personnel, including professionals and paraprofessionals, are adequately trained and prepared, including:
 - (A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (B) to the extent that such standards are not based on the highest requirements in the State applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the State is currently taking and the steps the State plans to take to retrain or hire personnel within the designated State unit so that such personnel meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the State;
 - (4) standards to ensure the availability of personnel within the designated State unit or other individuals who are, to the maximum extent feasible, trained to communicate in the native language or mode of communication of an applicant or eligible individual;
 - (5) staff development to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training; and

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (6) coordination of its personnel development system with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.12 Annual state goals and reports of progress. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

(a) Assessments and estimates.

- (1) **Attachment 4.12(a)** documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has such a Council) every 3 years, and:
 - (A) describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:
 - (i) individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
 - (ii) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State plan; and
 - (iii) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, as identified by such individuals and personnel assisting such individuals through the components.
 - (B) provides an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.
- (2) For any year in which the State revises the assessments, the designated State unit submits to the Commissioner a report containing information regarding revisions to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

The designated State agency annually submits **Attachment 4.12(b)** that includes, State estimates of the:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (1) number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State plan;
- (2) number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I of the Act and under part B of title VI of the Act, including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection in accordance with paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
- (3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (1), including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) **Goals and priorities.**

- (1) **Attachment 4.12(c)(1)** identifies the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.
- (2) **Order of selection.**
 - (A) If the State agency is operating on an order of selection, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.
 - (B) If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B)** satisfies all of the provisions identified in paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.
- (3) **Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.**

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(4) Basis.

The goals and priorities are based on:

- (A)** the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;
 - (B)** the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and
 - (C)** other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- (5)** In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

(d) Strategies.

Attachment 4.12(d) describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

- (1)** address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;
- (2)** carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (3) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) **Evaluation and reports of progress.**

Attachment 4.12(e) describes the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and includes an annual joint report of the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, to the Commissioner on the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year. The description includes:

- (1) an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in subparagraph (c) of this subsection plan were achieved;
- (2) an identification of the strategies that contributed to achieving the goals;
- (3) to the extent to which the goals were not achieved, an explanation of the factors that impeded that achievement;
- (4) an assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Act; and
- (5) a report consistent with paragraph 4.13(c) of this State plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Act:
 - (1) for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State identified in paragraphs 4.12(a) and (c) of this State plan; and

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(2) to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 105(d)(1) of the Act, and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 705(e)(1) of the Act.

(b) **Attachment 4.12(d)** describes how the reserved funds identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of this State plan will be utilized.

(c) **Attachment 4.12(e)** describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.14 State-imposed requirements. (Section 17 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.39)

The designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guidelines.

4.15 Protection, use, and release of personal information. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.38)

The designated State agency and the designated State unit have policies and procedures that are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.38 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names.

4.16 Mediation and impartial due process hearing. (Section 102(c) of the Act)

(a) **Fair hearing board.**

There is a fair hearing board, established by the State prior to January 1, 1985, that is authorized under State law to review determinations or decisions made under the Act and to carry out the responsibilities of the impartial hearing officer.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

Yes __ No X

(b) **Mediation and review procedures.**

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "NO":

- (1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of and procedures for the review through an impartial due process hearing of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.
- (2) **Attachment 4.16(b)(2)** contains the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an impartial due process hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "YES":

- (1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.
- (2) **Attachment 4.16(b)(2)** contains the procedures for mediation.

4.17 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated State unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: SCOPE OF THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

5.1 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. (Section 103(a) of the Act)

Vocational rehabilitation services provided under this State plan are any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

- (a) an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
- (b) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and subsection 5.3 of this State plan;
- (c) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan;
- (d) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- (e) vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment services, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education shall be paid for with funds under this State plan unless maximum efforts have been made by the designated State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (f) to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source (such as through health insurance of the individual or through comparable services and benefits consistent with section 101(a)(8)(A) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan), other than the designated State unit, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, including:
- (1) corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time;
 - (2) necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment;
 - (3) prosthetic and orthotic devices;
 - (4) eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual;
 - (5) special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and
 - (6) diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;
- (g) maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an individualized plan for employment;
- (h) transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this subsection and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome;
- (i) on-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this subsection;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (j) interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind, after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;
- (k) rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, for individuals who are blind;
- (l) occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies;
- (m) technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided under the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;
- (n) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;
- (o) transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
- (p) supported employment services;
- (q) services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome; and
- (r) specific post-employment services necessary to assist an individual with a disability to retain, regain, or advance in employment.

5.2 Written policies governing the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.50)

- (a) The State unit has written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan and the criteria under which each service is provided.
- (b) The policies are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.50 and:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (1) ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment; and
- (2) do not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

5.3 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

5.4 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act)

Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.

5.5 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services to groups of individuals with disabilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49, .61 and .62)

- (a) The State plan provides for the following optional vocational rehabilitation services for the benefit of groups of individuals with disabilities.
 - (1) X The establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a community rehabilitation facility, that are used to provide services to promote integration and competitive employment.

If the State elects to use the authority to construct a facility for a community rehabilitation program, the following requirements are met:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (A) The Federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the State's allotment under section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.
- (B) The provisions of section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.
- (C) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated State agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
- (2) X Telecommunications systems, including telephone, television, satellite, radio, and similar systems, that have the potential for substantially improving service delivery methods of activities described in this section of this State plan and developing appropriate programming to meet the particular needs of individuals with disabilities.
- (3) X Special services to provide nonvisual access to information for individuals who are blind, including the use of telecommunications, Braille, sound recordings, or other appropriate media; captioned television, films, or video cassettes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; tactile materials for individuals who are deaf-blind; and other special services that provide information through tactile, vibratory, auditory, and visual media.
- (4) X Technical assistance and support services to businesses that are not subject to title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities.
- (5) X Small business enterprises operated by individuals with significant disabilities, the operation of which can be improved by the management services and supervision of the designated State agency, along or together with the acquisition by the designated State agency of vending facilities or other equipment and initial stocks and supplies.
- (A) If the State unit provides small business enterprise services, only individuals with significant disabilities are selected to participate in this supervised program.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (B) If the State unit sets aside funds from the proceeds of the operation of the small business enterprises, it has a description of the methods used in setting aside funds and the purposes for which funds are set aside.
- (C) Under its small business enterprises, the State unit provides:
 - (i) X only the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;
 - (ii) ___ only a program or programs other than the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;
 - (iii) ___ both the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program and another program(s).
- (6) X Consultative and technical assistance services to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.
- (7) X Other services that promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individualized plan for employment of any one individual with a disability.
- (b) If the State plan provides for any of these services to groups of individuals with disabilities, the designated State unit has:
 - (1) written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services it provides and the criteria under which each service is provided; and
 - (2) information to ensure the proper and efficient administration of those services in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including:
 - (A) the types of services provided;
 - (B) the costs of those services; and
 - (C) to the extent feasible, estimates of the numbers of individuals benefiting from those services.

5.6 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(a) **Contracts with for-profit organizations.**

The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

(b) **Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.**

The manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers is described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(3)**.

SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

6.1 Record of services. (Section 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.47)

The designated State unit maintains for each applicant or eligible individual a record of services that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.47.

6.2 Referrals and applications. (Sections 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.41)

(a) The designated State unit has standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. These standards include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority of services.

(b) Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination is made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, unless:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (1) exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual agree to a specific extension of time; or
- (2) the designated State unit is exploring an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform in work situations under section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

6.3 Information and referral services. (Section 101(a)(20) of the Act)

The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the State.

6.4 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) The designated State unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services.

Yes ___ No X

- (b) ***IF YES***, Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) contains an explanation that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.36(a)(2) or (3) and describes how, on the basis of the designated State unit's projected fiscal and personnel resources and its assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities within the State, it will:

- (1) continue to provide services to all individuals currently receiving services;
- (2) provide assessment services to all individuals expected to apply for services in the next fiscal year;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (3) provide services to all individuals who are expected to be determined eligible in the next fiscal year; and
- (4) meet all program requirements.

(c) **IF NO:**

- (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
- (2) **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** contains:
 - (A) the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (B) a justification for the order of selection.
- (3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria are provided access to the services provided through the designated State unit's information and referral system implemented under section 101(a)(20) of the Act and subsection 6.3 of this State plan.

6.5 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. (Sections 7(2)(A)(i) and (D), 7(20)(A), 101(a)(12) and 102(a)(1)(A), (2)(B) and (4) of the Act)

- (a) To determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services, if the State is operating under an order of selection, the designated State unit, to the maximum extent possible consistent with the requirements of this State plan, uses existing and current information, including information available from other programs and providers, particularly information provided by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the applicant and the family of the applicant.
- (b) To the extent that existing information is unavailable or insufficient, the designated State unit provides appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional information to make the determination regarding the applicant's eligibility, and, if applicable, the applicant's priority under an order of selection.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (c) The State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements.
- (1) A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.
 - (2) A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.
 - (3) A presumption, in accordance with section 102(a)(2)(A) of the Act and paragraph (d) of this subsection of the State plan, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.
 - (4) A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.
- (d) The designated State unit presumes that an applicant who meets the eligibility requirements in subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this subsection of this State plan can benefit in terms of an employment outcome unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability. In making such a demonstration, the designated State unit first explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences consistent with the provisions of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.
- (e) If there is appropriate evidence that establishes the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the designated State unit:
- (1) presumes the applicant to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual in accordance with the provisions of section 102(a)(2) of the Act and paragraph 6.5(d) of this State plan; and

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

(2) considers the applicant to be an individual with a significant disability consistent with the provisions of section 7(21)(A) of the Act.

(f) In the application of the eligibility criteria, the following requirements are met.

(1) No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State.

(2) No applicant or group of applicants is excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of the type of disability.

(3) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the age, gender, race, color, creed, or national origin of the applicant.

(4) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family.

6.6 Procedures for ineligibility determination. (Section 102(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.43)

If the State unit determines that an applicant is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services or determines that an individual receiving services under an individualized plan for employment is no longer eligible for services, the State unit:

(a) makes the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative;

(b) informs the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, including:

(1) the reasons for the determination; and

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (2) the description of the means by which the individual may express, and seek remedy for, any dissatisfaction with the determination, including the procedures for the review by an impartial hearing officer consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan;
- (c) provides the individual with a description of services available from the client assistance program and information on how to contact that program; and
- (d) reviews any ineligibility determination that is based on a finding that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within 12 months and annually thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative, except when the:
 - (1) individual has refused the review;
 - (2) individual is no longer present in the State;
 - (3) individual's whereabouts are unknown; or
 - (4) individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

6.7 Closure without ineligibility determination. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.44)

The State unit does not administratively close an applicant's record of services prior to making an eligibility determination unless the:

- (a) applicant declines to participate in, or is unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services; and
- (b) State unit has made a reasonable number of attempts to contact the applicant or, if appropriate, the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.

6.8 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.
- (b) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the eligible individual at the time needed to achieve the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit uses those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.
- (c) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.
- (d) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:
- (1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
 - (2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;
 - (3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State plan;
 - (4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 - (5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and
 - (6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (e) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection also do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
- (1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) an immediate job placement; or
 - (3) provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (f) The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, other than the services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

6.9 Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need. (Section 12(c) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.54)

- (a) No financial needs test is applied and no financial participation is required as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:
- (1) assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided during an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, consistent with the requirements of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act;
 - (2) assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;
 - (3) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (4) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through cooperative agreements under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan; and
 - (5) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.
- (b) The State unit considers the financial need of eligible individuals, or individuals who are receiving services during an exploration of an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations consistent with subparagraph (1) of paragraph (a) of this subsection, in order to determine the extent of the individual's participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services.

Yes X No __

(c) **IF YES:**

- (1) The State unit has written policies on the determination of financial need that are consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.54 and these policies:
- (A) are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances; and
 - (B) ensure that the level of the individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:
 - (i) reasonable;
 - (ii) based on the individual's financial need, including the consideration of any disability-related expenses paid by the individual; and
 - (iii) not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service.
- (2) **Attachment 6.9(c)(2)** specifies the services for which the designated State unit has a financial needs test.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

6.10 Development of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 7(2)(B), 101(a)(9), and 102(b)(1) and (2) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State unit conducts an assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual, including the need for supported employment services, or, if the State is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the State is able to provide services, for the purpose of identifying the provisions to be included in the individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act.
- (b) The development of the individualized plan for employment meets the following procedural requirements.
 - (1) The individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented in a timely manner subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services under this State plan, except if the State is operating under an order of selection, the individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented only for individuals to whom the State is able to provide services.
 - (2) The designated State unit provides to the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information on the individual's options for the development of the individualized plan for employment, including:
 - (A) information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual;
 - (B) a description of the full range of components that must be included in an individualized plan for employment;
 - (C) as appropriate,

EFFECTIVE DATE:**October 1, 2000**

- (i) an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an individualized plan for employment;
 - (ii) additional information the eligible individual requests or the designated State unit determines to be necessary; and
 - (iii) information on the availability of assistance in completing designated State agency forms required in developing an individualized plan for employment;
- (D) a description of the rights and remedies available to the eligible individual, including, if appropriate, recourse to mediation and the impartial due process hearing consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan; and
- (E) a description of the availability of the client assistance program and information about how to contact the program.
- (3) The individualized plan for employment is developed as a written document prepared on forms provided by the designated State unit and is developed and implemented in a manner that affords eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, the settings in which the services will be provided, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the services consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.
- (4) The individualized plan for employment is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit with a copy of the individualized plan for employment provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.
- (5) The individualized plan for employment is reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of the designated State agency or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as determined to be appropriate by the individual.

- (6) If there are substantive changes in the individualized plan for employment with respect to the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the services, such amendments to the individualized plan for employment do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit.

6.11 Mandatory components of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 101(a)(9), 102(b)(3), and 625(b)(6)(C),(E), and (F) of the Act)

- (a) Each individualized plan for employment includes, at a minimum, the following mandatory components describing the:
 - (1) specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;
 - (2) specific rehabilitation services that are:
 - (A) needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and
 - (B) provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;
 - (3) timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;
 - (4) entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure the services;

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (5) criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;
 - (6) terms and conditions of the individualized plan for employment, including, as appropriate, information related to the:
 - (A) responsibilities of the designated State unit;
 - (B) responsibilities of the eligible individual, including those related to:
 - (i) the achievement of the employment outcome;
 - (ii) participation, if applicable, in the paying the costs of the plan; and
 - (iii) applying for and securing comparable benefits consistent with the requirements of section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and
 - (C) responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits requirements as identified in section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and
 - (7) projected need for post-employment services, as determined to be necessary.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate also contains the identification of the:
- (1) extended services needed by the eligible individual; and
 - (2) source of the extended services or, to the extent that the source of extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the individualized plan for employment, the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that extended services will become available.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

6.12 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State unit:
- (1) conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State plan who has achieved an employment outcome 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 (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; and
 - (2) makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in subparagraph (a)(1) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (b) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation, and acknowledges through sign-off that such review and reevaluation have been conducted.

STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**SECTION 7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION****7.1 Designated state agency.** (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated State agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in subsection 1.2 of the title I State plan is the State agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under title VI, part B of the Act.

7.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))**EFFECTIVE DATE:****October 1, 2000**

Attachment 4.12(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) of the title I State plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities and the need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

7.3 Quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 7.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services.

7.4 Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) identifies the State's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.

7.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.9(c)(4) describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

7.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.12(d)(2) describes the designated State agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

7.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

The designated State agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under part B of title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated State agency expends no more than five percent of the State's allotment under section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

8.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act are used by the designated State agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under title VI, part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
- (c) Funds provided under part B of title VI or title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under part B of title VI or title I of the Act.

SECTION 9: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

9.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in section 7(36) of the Act.
- (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

9.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities. (Section 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities, including the assessment of rehabilitation, career, and employment needs, conducted under section 102(b)(1)(A) of the Act and paragraph 6.10(a) of this State plan and funded under title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

9.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act and subsections 6.10 and .11 of this State plan is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment:
- (1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
- (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs.

ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED OF ALL AGENCIES

Attachment 4.9(c): Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

- (1) Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities
- (2) Coordination with Education Officials
- (3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers
- (4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

Attachment 4.11(b): Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Attachment 4.12 Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports

- (a): Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs
- (b): Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services
- (c)(1): State's Goals and Priorities
- (c)(3): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
- (d): State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities
 - (1) To Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities
 - (2) To Carryout Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities
 - (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.
- (e): Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use Of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Attachment 4.16(b)(2): Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

Attachment 7.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

ATTACHMENTS CONTINGENT ON OPTIONS SELECTED

The following attachments identified by an "X" are also submitted as part of the State plan.

- X 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
- __ Attachment 4.5: Local Administration
- __ Attachment 4.6(a)(3): Request for Waiver of Statewideness
- __ Attachment 4.7(b): Shared Funding and Administration of Joint Program
- X Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A): Order of Selection
- __ Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B): Explanation to Support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection
- X Attachment 6.9(c)(2): Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

EFFECTIVE DATE:

October 1, 2000

ATTACHMENT 6.9(c)(2)

SERVICES SUBJECT TO FINANCIAL NEEDS TEST

The combined State Agency considers the financial need of individuals to determine the extent of their participation in the cost of rehabilitation services. The services subject to a financial means test are as follows:

1. Medical or surgical treatment;
2. Psychiatric and psychological treatment;
3. Dentistry;
4. Nursing services, home health aide services, attendants;
5. Hospitalization (includes in-patient, out-patient, and clinic services);
6. Convalescent, nursing, or rest home care;
7. Chronic pain services;
8. Drugs and supplies;
9. Prosthetic devices;
10. Physical therapy;
11. Occupational therapy;
12. Medically directed speech, hearing, and language therapy;
13. Physical rehabilitation in a community rehabilitation setting;
14. Treatment of medical complications and emergencies, either acute or chronic, which are associated with or arise out of the provision of physical restoration services, or are inherent in the condition under treatment;
15. Other medical or medically-related rehabilitation services;

16. Maintenance;
17. Transportation services, in connection with the rendering of any rehabilitation service;
18. Services to family members, if necessary, to enable the individual with a disability to achieve a vocational outcome;
19. Academic training in institutions of higher learning;
20. Training in business schools, trade and technical schools, and other programs;
21. Room and board associated with training;
22. Correspondence/long-distance learning training programs;
23. Tutorial training;
24. Training supplies, equipment, books, and fees;
25. Functional occupancy adaptation (Adaptive Housing);
26. Motor vehicle and van modification;
27. Occupational services, including licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies;
28. Personal assistance services;
29. Driver's training;
30. Independent living services;
31. Child care services;
32. Aids to daily living—adaptive equipment;
33. Telecommunication, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;
34. Computers, computer software, printers, and other hardware; and

35. Other vocational rehabilitation services, including post-employment services, **except** diagnostic services to evaluate rehabilitative potential and eligibility, vocational counseling and guidance, work adjustment programs in Agency approved rehabilitation facilities, supported employment services by Agency approved providers, rehabilitation evaluation/assessment services, interpreter (sign language) services for the deaf, orientation and mobility services for individuals with visual impairments, and placement services.

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 Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) continued its vital mission of facilitating employment for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. Specifically, the Council's resources have been directed at assisting the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) in meeting their goals and objectives. To conduct its business, the full Council met quarterly; the Executive Committee met quarterly; each Committee held numerous meetings and a day-long planning retreat was held in October, 1998. In particular, the focus at the Retreat was on the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. Also, there was discussion regarding the Council's major areas of concern for the upcoming year.

The Council was involved in four major issues in 1998. The first issue was the ongoing implementation of the One-Stop Career Centers. Two of these Career Centers opened in 1998 with two more scheduled to open in 1999. Preliminary data indicate that this mode of service delivery will be a positive resource for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. The Council, however, will continue to monitor the implementation of these One-Stop Career Centers to ensure that ORS clients are benefiting from this arrangement with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.

The Council commended ORS this year for increasing its staff. The addition of new staff, however, led the Council to a second issue: new counselor training. The Council educated itself on the ORS orientation and ongoing professional development programs that are in place for new and continuing counselors; recommendations for change were made. In conjunction with this issue, the Council worked to increase its visibility among ORS staff counselors. To that end, the Council Chair attended an ORS staff meeting and four counselors participated in the October planning retreat.

Transition services continue to be of concern to the Council. Numerous efforts have been made during 1998 to facilitate services designed to ease the transition from school-to-work for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. This issue will continue to be a priority for 1999.

Since August, the Council has been actively engaged in processing the Rehabilitation Act Reauthorization. This legislation, which authorizes and defines the role of the SRC, mandates significant changes for both the Council and ORS. One of the most obvious changes is deletion of *Advisory* from the Council's title. More significantly, the Reauthorization mandates strong adherence to the concept of Informed Choice for consumers of ORS services, and active involvement in a Workforce Investment Board. Both issues are complex, and the Council is committed to assuring that these changes are implemented in the best interest of Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

Many challenges lie ahead as the Council strives, in conjunction with ORS, to facilitate maximum employment for Rhode Islanders with disabilities. In 1999, the Council will continue its efforts to implement the 1998 Rehabilitation Reauthorization Act, attend to transition issues, and follow through with monitoring of the One-Stop Career Centers. Emerging issues which the Council will address in 1999 include: a) potential reorganization of the existing committee structure, to better position us to respond to the challenges ahead; and b) exploration of increasing the Council's autonomy from ORS, particularly as it relates to monitoring consumer satisfaction.

Summary of Committee Activities

The **Employment Committee** had an active year as they facilitated six Employer Meetings at ORS. These meetings were held throughout the year to facilitate communication between ORS and employers, and to devise ways to work together more effectively. The Employment Committee has not only provided ORS Counselors with labor market information, but they have offered meaningful suggestions on developing a marketing packet to increase effectiveness of employer contacts. Some suggestions included how to develop a portfolio of relevant information to utilize when meeting with employers, as well as how to present the information in a meeting with employers. The portfolio is still in production.

The **Policy Committee** continues to review ORS policies and make recommendations with an eye toward facilitating Informed Choice and consumer-oriented service provision. Revision to ORS policy relative to short-term vocational training was completed during the year. The intent of the change is to provide more options for training, without the requirement to file for Federal Financial Aid, when planning to attend a non-Pell eligible institution. A maximum of \$1,900 would be available to an individual. The Policy Committee stated that this is, in fact, a restrictive change, however, the Agency has implemented the change believing that it is appropriate and equitable. As a result of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, ORS is reviewing and revising a number of its policy sections. The Policy Committee of the SRC will be participating in this process from its initiation to its completion.

The **Nominating Committee** enjoyed a stable Council membership this year. With Council membership high (23), potential new members were encouraged to join existing committees to increase their knowledge of the SRC prior to becoming full Council members. In particular, focus has been, and will continue to be, on ensuring broad representation from diverse populations, including minorities.

The **Legislative/Advocacy Committee** continued their strong interest in promoting diversity and full participation by minorities. Additionally, the Council successfully advocated for a pay rate increase for Personal Care Attendants, and for funding of two ORS positions that were essential for the effective and efficient provision of rehabilitation services.

The **Strategic Plan Committee** developed several major recommendations, related to consumer satisfaction and transition services, to enhance the services offered by ORS. In particular, a recommendation was made that a consultant be hired to assist ORS with its customer satisfaction surveys. ORS will work together with the Council to develop criteria for hiring a consultant to develop and implement the satisfaction surveys. Also, the Committee has suggested that ORS concentrate greater effort on strategies for assisting school-aged customers in obtaining a high school diploma, either through staying in school or via GED.

The Committee has also strongly recommended that ORS review its Cooperative Agreement for Transition of Students from School to Work with the Rhode Island Department of Education to ensure that the requirements of the Law are reflected in the Agreement.

The **State Plan Committee** provided valuable input to ORS in updating the State Plan. Suggested changes, and/or additions which were considered to be appropriate, were included in the Plan. In particular, the Committee expressed a concern that clearer definition be provided by ORS relative to how the Agency is implementing Informed Choice. ORS continues to develop strategies for responding to this philosophical change. Staff training has occurred and will be an ongoing process to ensure that customers are provided with necessary information to make decisions regarding all aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process. The Committee has also recommended that counseling staff be hired with appropriate credentials. Although this would be an ideal situation, ORS must develop a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development that meets the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, and is consistent with State Personnel to devise a suitable resolution to this situation. Members of the Council will be actively involved in the update and revision of Attachments to the existing State Plan. Individuals with expertise or particular interest in the various topic areas will be participating with Agency work groups to provide input into the development of the Plan.

ORS greatly appreciates the thoughtful consideration given by the members of the Council in providing their valuable input in the preparation of this document. Many of the recommendations made by the SRC have been incorporated into the Plan, such as strengthening the Agency's role with high school students regarding Transition services. In addition, there will be particular focus on intervention with students attending the Rhode Island School for the Deaf. Consistent with this, ORS will work towards improving interpreter services for individuals who are deaf, as well as those for foreign languages. ORS is also including a focus on ADD, ADHD students and the TANF program. The SRC has also recommended that ORS include detailed information to its customers regarding vendors, such as consumer satisfaction, cost, quality and types of services provided, etc., with which ORS is in agreement. ORS also agrees to include such information in the Resource Manual which is being developed. Essentially, the recommendations of the SRC relate to improved services to students in high school, and those who are transitioning to college or employment, and ensuring that Informed Choice is carried out throughout the rehabilitation process. ORS concurs fully with these recommendations.

ORS does not accept the recommendation that all community rehabilitation programs must obtain CARF certification. The Agency believes that strongly encouraging the CRPs to do so fosters a more positive working partnership (Attachment 4.9(c)(3)).

Also, ORS does not think that the term "reasonable accommodations" should be limited to one disability group, but rather the concept should be applied equitably among all disability populations (Attachment 4.9(c)(2)).

It was also recommended that language be changed in Attachment 4.12(a) relative to the Agency's fee schedule. However, ORS believes that the existing language adequately addresses this concern.

The SRC has stated strongly that ORS should hire only those who have already earned a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation and that current Personnel Rules place the Agency at risk of non-compliance with the requirements of the Law. The Law allows for a "qualified" Rehabilitation Counselor to possess a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation or a closely related field. ORS is addressing the CSPD requirements by meeting with State Personnel to upgrade job descriptions and entry level requirements, as well as to provide opportunities for all staff to obtain the highest level of skills via completion of specific graduate courses in "core" areas (Attachment 4.11(b)).

The **Bylaws Committee** was available throughout the year to advise the Council on Bylaws issues. No changes in the Council's Bylaws were proposed or adopted in 1998. However, with the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Bylaws Committee will be recommending necessary changes to the existing Bylaws to ensure consistency with the Law. Such changes will include adding a representative from the Workforce Investment Board. Also, the term limit for the representative from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) will be eliminated.

FUTURE CONCERNS

The State Rehabilitation Council has begun a process of reorganizing itself in order to be more effective and responsive regarding its stronger role, as described in WIA. Proposed changes in committee structure and duties have been brought before the full Council for consideration. Existing committees may be consolidated, but their responsibilities will be expanded. For example, the Strategic Planning Committee will become the Quality Control Committee, with a focus on consumer satisfaction surveys and monitoring the implementation of Informed Choice.

Other proposed changes to the committee structure include the combining of the Policy Committee and the State Plan Committee. By implementing this change, there will be more Council members to assist in the process of developing policies consistent with the 1998 Amendments, as well as provide consistent input in the updating of the State Plan.

Although one important role of the existing Nominating Committee has been to ensure that the Council reflects the diverse nature of society, and in particular individuals with disabilities, the Committee will expand its focus beyond the annual recruitment of new members, to ongoing education of Council members relative to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) activities within the Agency. ORS will be looking to the Council for assistance in refining its training program. Since the Committee will be actively involved in a process of staff development and SRC membership development, the name of the Committee may become the Membership Development Committee.

The Executive Committee has had the ongoing responsibility of overseeing all functions of the Council, but its role may be expanded to include outreach and linkage to other Councils and community organizations. This should provide a mechanism for increased awareness of the Council and ORS, as well as to strengthen ties to the disability community at large.

As stated previously, the Council will be concentrating a great deal of time and energy on learning about the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and how it may impact on services to individuals with disabilities. It is expected that the process will be a lengthy one. Also, the Council will be looking very closely at hiring an assistant to facilitate administrative responsibilities, therefore, allow Council members to assume their more active role as a partner to ORS.

ATTACHMENT 4.12(c)(2)(A)

ORDER OF SELECTION

Justification of Order of Selection

The continuation of the Order of Selection during FY2000 is warranted because, due to funding, the Agency is unable to serve all eligible applicants. Available monies are strained in serving existing caseloads.

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:

1. 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**
2. whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time, **AND**

3. 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.

FY 2000-2005 Projections

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.

New Applications and Outcomes

	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005
Applications	1900	2000	2100	2200	2300	2400
Outcomes	607	630	650	670	690	720

Outcomes by Priority Category of the Order of Selection (OOS implemented 11-92)

	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005
Cat. 1	412(68%)	428(68%)	442(68%)	462(69%)	476(69%)	497(69%)
Cat. 2	164(27%)	176(28%)	182(28%)	188(28%)	200(29%)	216(30%)
Cat. 3	1(0%)	0	0	0	0	0
Pre OOS	30(5%)	26(4%)	26(4%)	20(3%)	14(2%)	7(1%)
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 607	<hr/> 630	<hr/> 650	<hr/> 670	<hr/> 690	<hr/> 720

ATTACHMENT 4.12(b)

ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED AND COSTS OF SERVICES (PROJECTION FOR FY2001)

- (1) Number of Individuals in the State who are Eligible for Services under this State Plan. Projected applicants in FY2001 = 2001. In FY99, the number of eligibility decisions were 78% the number of applications, consistent with recent trends. Therefore, projected eligible clients in 2001 = 1561.

- (2) Number of Individuals who will Receive Services under Title 1, Part B and Title VI, Part B, and Numbers to be Served in each Order of Selection Priority Category. Trends over the last three years have shown a growth in total Agency caseload of 100 or more annually, with a steady 83% of total caseload classified as accepted/served. Therefore, projected total number of clients to be served in FY2001 = 3600. Of these, 500 are projected to be Title VI, Part B clients (projected upward from FY99's 480). Since all Supported Employment clients are classified as having the Most Significant Disabilities, then all 500 clients will be classified as Order of Selection priority category #1. Of the 3100 clients projected to be served under Title 1, Part B, 15%, or 465, are projected to be clients who were accepted prior to the implementation of Order of Selection in 1992, while 45%, or 1395, are projected to be classified as Order of Selection category #1, and the remaining 40%, or 1240, as Order of Selection category #2.

- (3) Costs of Services for Projected Total Number of Clients to be Served, including Service Costs under each Order of Selection Priority Category. Approximate annual average expenditures per client in post-eligibility status in FY98 = \$1200. No significant change is expected in the short term.

Order of Selection Priority Category	Category #1 = 1895	Category #2 = 1240	Pre-Order of Selection Clients=465
Costs per Category Served	\$2,274,000	\$1,488,000.00	\$558,000.00

ATTACHMENT 4.12(d)(2)

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

The following strategies will be initiated or expanded in order to provide equal access to minority populations:

Provide outreach, liaison and intake in community minority-run organizations. Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with at least one minority organization annually, starting with Genesis. Liaison to be provided by ORS bi-lingual staff, to the extent possible, plus use of interpreters.

Use outreach information sources, like minority radio programs (including information about public meetings).

Provide outreach, liaison and intake in community health centers institutions of higher education, Department of Health Minority Project, and minority owned organizations, colleges and universities.

Identify transition needs for minority populations. Utilize transition mentor program where possible.

Through partnership with netWORKri One-Stops, provide outreach, liaison and services, such as GATB and workshops in Spanish. Provide netWORKri brochure in Spanish. Continue to provide orientation to ORS in Spanish at the two One-Stops with significant minority populations (Providence and Pawtucket).

Recruit bi-lingual secretary for handling initial appointments and to handle the Hispanic Hotline. Continue bi-lingual caseload for non-English speaking individuals and Southeast Asian liaison.

Update all ORS forms and materials in languages of minority populations.

Expand capacity of vendors to serve minority populations. Develop fee schedule with one community organization and explore need for Innovation and Expansion funding to expand capacity of vendors to serve minority populations.

Develop working relationship with Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in order to develop assessment and employment opportunities where an interpreter is not needed.

ORS Cultural Diversity Cadre will meet quarterly to review progress in implementing equal access to services and report to Administration.

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 following barriers to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program have been identified.

1. There is a lack of knowledge about benefits available for individuals who receive SSI, SSDI and TANF.
2. Transportation.
3. Lack of a system available to counselors and consumers for informed choice.
4. Language and cultural barriers and limited services for non-English speaking individuals.
5. Limited employment options for individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities.
6. Limited options for individuals with hidden disabilities, such as ADD/ADHD.
7. Limited options for self-employment and trial work.
8. Lack of staff knowledge about self-employment, trial work and about the changing labor market in the information age.
9. Lack of interpreters certified to work in State colleges.
10. Limited resources for individuals with sensory impairments and severe physical disabilities.

Elimination of Barriers

1. Provide training and technical assistance related to how Informed Choice is implemented (attitudinal changes, role definition of counselor; responsibility of customers and options available). Include choice language in all communication tools and opportunities (presentations). Include options for Informed Choice on Web Site. Complete Choice Manual (first draft) by 9-99 and revise/update upon evaluation of use yearly.
2. Purchase software programs for counselors to use to address questions about benefits so those individuals can overcome fears and make informed choices.
3. Staff training on welfare and Social Security programs and work incentives.
4. Departmental and inter-departmental collaborations regarding transportation.
5. Peer training regarding transportation for adult consumers (required in IDEA regulations of students).
6. Develop a statewide transportation system that covers all sections of the State.
7. Develop a questionnaire to be used for informed decision-making when developing the IPE.
8. Update the ORS Fee Schedule.
9. Expand vocational service options in under-served areas of the State.
10. Expand service for minorities through innovation and expansion funding.
11. Recruit bilingual secretary/receptionist.
12. Innovation and expansion funding to develop self-employment and business options for individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities.
13. Develop a strategy for trial work to determine rehabilitation potential including meeting with employers.
14. Learn directly from employers about new occupations in various industries.

15. Develop strategy with State colleges that will increase certified interpreters and assign ORS liaison from Deaf Services unit to lead and monitor effort.
16. ORS will continue to review and expand training options available for utilization by customers to reach employment goals.

ATTACHMENT 4.9(c)(3)

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NON-PROFIT
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Cooperative Agreements, or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), will be developed with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers that will promote person-centered services resulting in community-based employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The MOUs will include commitment to person-centered planning, community-based rehabilitation services, roles and responsibilities of staff from each agency, and service expectations from the service provider, and fees of the services. Included in the MOU will be the mechanism to resolve disputes and the necessity for each service provider to advise clientele of the availability of the Client Assistance Program (CAP). The ORS/Service Provider MOUs will promote service standards as described in CARF, and Service Providers will be encouraged to seek CARF accreditation. MOUs will include a provision for assessing customer satisfaction.

MOUs will provide the connecting point of the private non-profit rehabilitation provider system with the One-Stop Career systems and, in particular, coordinate the employer services of the One-Stops with job development effort of the CRPs and promote person-centered practices.

ATTACHMENT 4.9(c)(4)

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

The Designated State Agency continues to collaborate with private non-profit supported employment service providers and State funding sources for extended services. Individual Plans for Employment (IPE) (formerly IWRP) will define the source of extended services. Collaboration will be strengthened by the MOU process described in Attachment 4.9(c)(3).

Currently, two major groups of "Placement Coalitions" meet monthly to discuss issues related to supported employment. ORS staff participate in both the Rhode Island and Southern Placement Coalitions. The Placement Coalitions bring together community rehabilitation program staff, educational programs, and other service providers to provide a forum for collaborative problem solving and information dissemination.

Collaboration regarding supported employment services occurs through the Third Party Cooperative Agreement with the State Division of Integrated Mental Health Services and Developmental Disabilities. These agencies work with ORS and provider agencies to promote person-centered service planning, community-based employment services, and opportunities for cross-training of staff that will promote coordinated service provision.

The Division of Integrated Mental Health Services is collaborating with the ORS to promote supported employment services and outcomes and to convert psychosocial day programs to employment driven services.

Current and future planning will include developing seamless systems of supports for students who are making transition to adult life. There will need to be a clearly defined and accessible system for serving students who are identified by ORS as eligible for supported employment services. This will include training to the IEP teams as to how collaboration in the provision of ongoing supports can be implemented for a student.

A transition goal for every student is employment with career paths in community integrated work settings. Ideally, initial supports will be primarily provided through educational system with technical assistance from the Office of Rehabilitation Services. Time-limited supports that are coordinated, and when appropriate, funded by ORS could

be provided during the last half of the student's last year. ORS supports may continue after graduation as the mechanism for extended ongoing supports is established for the individual. The vehicle for collaboration is the Transition Council, both Third Party Cooperative Agreements (MHRH—DHS/ORS and RIDE-DHS/ORS), the interagency cooperative agreement defining roles and responsibility between RIDE and DHS/ORS (in development).

ATTACHMENT 4.12(a)

**RESULTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF THE
REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND
NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY
REHABILITATION PROGRAMS**

The State Agency's comprehensive needs assessment resulted from a variety of work groups, strategic planning efforts of other State agencies, focus groups with ORS staff, SRC input, and from public meetings.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS:

- There needs to be an expansion of options for employment, including full-time employment, self-employment, and telecommuting.
- The partnership with the SRC Employment Committee and other employers needs to support the ORS' efforts to increase employment outcomes through focused agendas and follow-up activities.
- Need to develop capacity to provide trial work in community-based settings to effectively assess rehabilitation potential.
- ORS must ensure that rehabilitation technology is considered throughout the rehabilitation process in order to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities can achieve their employment potential. Counselors and customers need to understand AT solutions related to employment and have the opportunity to use AT in all stages of the VR plan to assess maximum employment potential.
- According to DHS reports, 25-30% of individuals currently receiving TANF have Learning Disabilities that present significant barriers to employment. The Designated State Agency needs to provide timely services resulting in employment outcomes, in order to coordinate with the work requirements imposed by TANF.
- The ORS needs to ensure that Rehabilitation Counselors meet the CSPD standards required by WIA.

- As Rhode Island implements WIA and the One-Stop Career System, new partnerships are necessary and forming. Internally, systems of communication need to support and inform all staff of the changing system, new partnerships, and to ascertain how the new system is supporting individuals with disabilities. External communication needs to consistently support the mission of ORS and support a coordinated, seamless system of services that assist individuals with disabilities to work.
- ORS needs to provide staff to be active of the Local Workforce Investment Boards, Youth Councils in addition to the State Workforce Investment Board.
- Testimony at the Public Meeting identified transportation as an area that could be enhanced by the support of peer travel training. Transportation is a key supportive service to enable individuals with disabilities to go to work and needs to be addressed early in the VR planning.
- The ORS needs to enhance the opportunities for informed choice related to application for, and utilization of, services by individuals with disabilities. This includes information about cost of service, accessibility of service, and duration of service, consumer satisfaction with providers, qualifications of providers, types of services offered by providers, and the degree to which services are offered in integrated settings.
- The current fee structure does not widely promote individualized person-centered planning and is not sufficiently flexible to meet the broad range of needs that individuals with disabilities have to effectively choose and reach their employment goals.
- Vocational assessment, work preparation services, and supported employment are not consistent in all areas of the State.
- The ORS needs to increase the percentiles in caseload of individuals who are minorities to be consistent with the State population and develop services that will be effective in assisting those individuals to work.
- Individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities need a consistently easily accessed and coordinated service system, including expanded employment options (self-employment and business development) and supported education options for individuals with mental illness.

- There needs to be a coordinated Transition Service system among Education Agencies, State Agencies, and Higher Education. ORS will provide consultation and technical assistance to school systems, and coordination and provision of community-based employment-planning services that results in increased numbers of students with disabilities served through the ORS. A specific focus needs to be made on the students representing diverse cultures, students who are in danger of dropping out of school, and early intervention strategies for students with significant Learning Disabilities.
- The State has a limited capacity of job coaches to meet the needs of all individuals with significant disabilities who require ongoing supports in order to work (particularly those who do not have long-term funding resources through DDD or DIMHS).
- Individuals who are blind and visually impaired need services that help them access Community Rehabilitation Programs for the general populations. Programs that are out-of-state are difficult to access. The travel requirements stand in the face of customer choice. Certain authorized training programs, such as JAWS Software Training, have no certified Rhode Island vendors.
- ORS will institute mediation policy compatible with the 1998 Amendments.

ATTACHMENT 4.12(d)(1)

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

Strategies to enhance employer partnerships:

- ORS will work with the SRC Employment Committee Chair to develop a mechanism to use the meetings and employer resources most effectively. (Agendas, follow-up plans, reinforced mission, etc.)
- ORS will develop formalized mechanisms with CRPs that will link their employment efforts with the Workforce Investment System.

Strategies to address need related to consideration of rehabilitation technology throughout the VR process in order to ensure that all customers are provided information about AT possibilities related to achieving employment goals and, if appropriate, assistive technology devices and services:

- In partnership with the State's AT project (ATAP) will provide/coordinate annual training related to how to consider rehabilitation technology in application, employment planning, and in employment and resource material to assist ORS Counselors and customers to understand the benefits of assistive technology.
- The Agency will make available in appropriate formats, materials that will reinforce the training, as well as develop a cadre of staff technical assistance resources to assist Counselors and customers (staff point people; in-house technology newsletter, e-mail; accessible resource room, etc.).
- ORS will work with the ATAP program to increase the assistive technology informational resources available in the One-Stop Career Centers.
- Language about rehabilitation technology has and will be included in all revisions of policies related to providing rehabilitation services.

Strategies related to expanding VR services for TANF recipients who have significant disabilities:

- Work with the Department of Human Services staff to design a coordinated service system of vocational rehabilitation and case management services for individuals with disabilities who are in the FIP program.
- Delegate specific staff to coordinate service delivery and provide technical assistance to all VR field staff who are liaisons to FIP centers.
- Develop in-house expertise in the needs of individuals with learning disabilities and other hidden disabilities (training, fact sheets, and e-mail), such as ADHD/ADD.
- Coordinate VR services for individuals eligible for FIP with services in One-Stop Career Centers.

Strategies related to the development of transportation resources in order to assist individuals with disabilities to go to work:

- Develop transportation fact sheets for all customers as they develop their Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Utilize Innovation and Expansion resources to develop new options for travel, such as peer travel training.
- Designate staff to liaison with Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) related to building accessible transportation options and to improved para-transit service.

Strategies to provide information to enable customers to make choices about their employment goals and services to reach the goals:

- Develop or revise communication tools in a variety of formats in order to provide information to applicants and eligible customers about access to VR services, types of services, vendors, options for developing and implementing Plans for Employment, job retention and career advancement services. In particular, individuals must have information related to benefits and employment.
- All ORS communications to include person-centered language that promotes decision-making and informed choice of customers.

- Develop relationships with advocacy and parent organizations that will provide secondary communication networks about vocational rehabilitation and employment services.
- Use the ORS Home Page for information, including application, the IPE form, choice guide, etc.

Strategies related to enhancing services for individuals with mental illness:

- ORS will work with the Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals to organize a coordinated employment services delivery in consort with the services available through the community mental health providers under the new mental health services delivery system, Rhode Island Assertive Community Treatment (RIACT).
- ORS will expand search to colleges and universities about programs that support students with psychiatric disabilities.
- ORS will explore how supported education services can be implemented to assist students with mental illness who require higher education to achieve their employment goals.

Strategies to expand services to effectively reach individuals with disabilities representing linguistic and cultural differences:

- ORS will explore establishment funding to engage agencies in the cultural communities to assist individuals to access vocational rehabilitation services. Further strategies related to minority outreach and services are included in 4.12(d)(2).

Strategies to create a more flexible fee schedule that promotes person-centered planning:

- The fee schedule is in the process of being re-drafted into a person-centered format and fees updated.
- ORS will attempt to bridge gaps in the availability of ongoing support to individuals with traumatic brain injury through fee schedule changes.

Strategies related to ensuring that staff is meeting CSPD requirements:

- See Attachment 4.11(b).

Strategies to ensure that ORS is accessed throughout the State and that individuals with disabilities can access the employment resources through the One-Stop Career system:

- ORS staff will be co-located in each One-Stop Center.
- ORS will work with the One-Stop system to ensure full accessibility for individuals with disabilities in order to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
- Linkage with the CRP network will be made through MOUs and other connecting activities.
- Strategies related to this goal are also included in Attachment 4.12(d)(3).

ATTACHMENT 4.12(c)(3)

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

The Title VI, Part B, funds will be distributed through fee-for-service mechanism, with emphasis on individually planned services and outcome-based payments. ORS will engage supported employment vendors through MOUs, and through the process clarify service expectations and definitions in supported employment. ORS plans to examine the current service structure and revise to promote person-centered services. Supported employment services will focus on the type and extent of support (including personal adjustment, disability awareness related to employment planning) each individual requires.

The focus of funding will be to empower customers, vendors, and Counselors to individualize service to provide person-centered supported employment planning. Weekly rates will be reconsidered in favor of daily service rates for individually planned services. Outcome based payments for appropriate services, such as Job Development, Placement, and Retention, will remain. The change from weekly to daily rates encourages more thought to determine what type and frequency of support an individual requires. This change will force movement from process of authorizing weeks at a time without analysis to planning what the individual needs to gain and continue in employment.

Current vendors, engaged through formal cooperative agreements, will join with the Designated Agency to clarify service expectations and definitions in Supported Employment as the entire service structure is examined. Supported Employment should focus on the difference in the length, type, and extent of support each individual requires.

The outcome of this improvement will be to focus on the quality and expectations of vendors agreeing to offer customers ongoing supports. To encourage ongoing connection, outcome tracking, and job retention, additional six and twelve month Supported Employment Retention Bonuses are suggested at \$500 each. This addition will open availability of Supported Employment services to more customers.

ATTACHMENT 7.3

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

There are currently thirty-three approved Supported Employment vendors providing services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who require ongoing support. The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) works with a caseload of more than 700 individuals who require supported employment. Successful rehabilitation outcomes were obtained for approximately twenty percent of individuals served. The goal is to increase the quality and percentage of employment outcomes and hours worked for individuals in supported employment. An ORS task group will work with supported employment vendors, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Integrated Mental Health Services to develop services and supports that will enhance successful outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities. The ORS task group will work collaboratively with other State and local funding sources to identify effective funding patterns that promote person-centered planning, customer satisfaction, and choices in service delivery.

Students with significant disabilities in transition from high school to adult life and supported employment will be provided supported employment services that are identified in the IEP. ORS will sponsor supported employment services during the last six months of the student's last year of high school to provide an effective transition to a community integrated job that he/she expects to retain after graduation.

The ORS will develop a fact sheet and information guide to help individuals choose services and service providers. Customers of ORS will also be encouraged to utilize the ORS home page and One-Stop Career Center services. ORS and service providers will plan cross training to improve communication and identify common values that result in improved outcomes and quality of services.

ATTACHMENT 4.9(c)(1)

**COOPERATION WITH AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT IN THE STATEWIDE
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER ENTITIES**

ORS cooperates with any agency that can provide services that will assist an individual with a disability to establish and reach his/her employment goal. Examples of cooperation are cross-informational services, presentations, collaborative planning with the individual with a disability. Agencies that ORS may work with include medical or disability support and educational agencies, professional associations, shelters, community centers, and food banks, etc.

The ORS has had a cooperative relationship, and will continue to cooperate, with the program funded under the National Industry for the Severely Handicapped (NISH) contract with the Newport Naval Base and In-Sight in the provision of vocational rehabilitation and/or supported employment services resulting in employment outcomes.

The ORS cooperates with Projects With Industry (PWI) through coordinated services to assist mutual customers to reach employment goals.

The ORS is cooperating with the Family Independence Program (FIP), funded through Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), to provide vocational rehabilitation services to FIP recipients who have Learning Disabilities. Examples of the cooperation are mutually developed and utilized screening and referral forms, coordinated support, vocational service provision and shared data. Longer range plans include sharing information about TANF funding and this project with Education personnel in order to advocate for an early educational intervention for individuals with Learning Disabilities related to employment. (Also included in Attachment 4.12(d)(3)).

The ORS has cooperative agreements with the three State colleges related to the provision of interpreter services for students to enable them to complete their rehabilitation program leading to employment. Cooperative agreements will be the vehicle to work with Higher Education related to developing strategies to meet the interpreter needs of deaf students related to the decreased availability of certified interpreters.

The ORS has a cooperative agreement relative to serving individuals who are patients in the Eleanor Slater Hospital and who want to reach employment goals.

The ORS has developed and will continue to cooperate with agencies that provide alcohol and drug services related to the coordination of referrals and service provision leading to employment outcomes.

The ORS has in effect a Third Party Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH) to merge funding to provide new patterns of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness that lead to employment outcomes.

The ORS has initiated steps to develop a cooperative agreement with the Medicaid agency relative to the provision of services, including assistive technology, that will ensure that individuals with disabilities are able to obtain and maintain employment.

The ORS will continue to explore and develop cooperative relationships with entities that can assist individuals with disabilities to reach employment goals and participate in the vocational rehabilitation program. In particular, relationships with CRPs and other non-profit vocational rehabilitation services will be enhanced and coordinated in order to fully connect with the Workforce Investment System in Rhode Island (see Attachment 4.9(c)(3)).

There are no interagency cooperative agreements for programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture because the State is not considered rural in nature.

ATTACHMENT 4.9(c)(2)

COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

ORS actively collaborates with Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide coordinated services to transitioning students to vocational rehabilitation services, adult life and employment. ORS and RIDE have shared resources to organize and provide new vocational rehabilitation services for students served by LEAs through regional transition centers. Opportunities developed are career exploration, job shadowing, situational assessments, work-based learning experiences, job placement and follow-up, to assist in better transition planning and career development.

ORS provides consultation and technical assistance to expand the capacity of educators and community providers to accommodate students that require the consideration of assistive technology to maximize rehabilitation potential.

ORS and RIDE are collaborating in the promotion of person-centered planning models that increase the practice of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) being developed jointly.

ORS and RIDE are in the process of revising the Cooperative Agreement (to be completed by 06/2000) for the purpose of providing the following:

1. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning the transition of students from school to vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes;
2. Coordination by Vocational Rehabilitation and the educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of the IEP;
3. Designation of roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities of each agency and provisions for designating the State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
4. Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services leading to employment.

ORS provides staff resources to serve students in the following ways:

1. ORS Counselors are liaisons to high schools in all school systems and are available to middle schools and private schools;
2. ORS Counselors participate in IEP meetings to coordinate the development of the IEP with the IPE and to provide information to students, families and education staff about community resources and other services that promote preparation for adult life and employment;
3. ORS has designated a Coordinator of Transition Services to build a coordinated skilled counseling staff related to improving transition services and to take the lead in revising cooperative agreements among ORS, RIDE, and, if necessary, the LEAs, relating to roles and responsibilities of education and vocational rehabilitation in transition services.

ORS is an active participant in the Transition Council, the entity, established in State law, that is charged with implementing cooperative relationships among State agencies and overseeing the transition system in Rhode Island. The Transition Council has developed an Interagency Cooperative Agreement to further coordinate transition services. It is anticipated that this Agreement will be expanded as agencies on the Council work together. ORS will work with the Transition Council to implement the Interagency Cooperative Agreement and build partnerships among State agencies.

ORS and local schools have implemented referral procedures, and ORS Counselors work with students to develop and facilitate informed decisions regarding vocational goals, intermediate objectives and services needed for career planning and employment.

ORS is working with the RIDE to develop coordinated approaches to communication in a variety of media that will advise students, parents, school personnel and other interested parties about ORS' purpose, services, resources, and benefits to eligible students.

ORS maintains linkages with the School-to-Career initiative by participating on regional committees and planning within the regions how to include students with disabilities in the "all kids" agenda (inclusion of all students from a broad range of backgrounds, including students with disabilities).

ORS assists with the coordination of services with community rehabilitation programs, Regional Educational Collaboratives, post-secondary institutions and other State partners to provide assessments and work-based experiences to assist students making informed choices related to work and independent living upon completing school programs.

ORS participates with education officials on interagency committees, councils, training programs planning teams, such as Transition Council, CSPD committees, School Improvement Teams, Regional Transition Advisory Committees School-to-Career partnerships, Transition System Change initiatives, Transition Service fairs, school and parent organizations.

ORS coordinates services for students with supported employment programs through the MHRH Third Party Cooperative Agreement and explores avenues for cross-training of staff.

ORS continues efforts to collaborate with Social Security to maintain information about benefits and work incentives.

ORS and RIDE Transition Center staff work to develop partnerships with employers and other agencies to provide work experiences, internships, summer jobs and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

ORS will coordinate outreach efforts in conjunction with the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), partnering with education, health and human services agency to reach and provide services to students who represent culturally diverse and minority populations.

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 ACTIVITIES**

ORS and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) have a responsibility to work in partnership to develop an annual report of the result of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program conducted by the SRC and ORS pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(E) of the Workforce Investment Act. The report is to include information about the progress that ORS has made in terms of meeting the goals and priorities that the SRC and ORS established. This report is to be part of Attachment 4.12(e) of the State Plan annual updates.

The year 2000 is a transition year for the State Rehabilitation Council and ORS, during which a plan to accomplish this responsibility will be developed. The capacity of the SRC to fulfill this responsibility depends on recruiting consultation services in order to develop a Needs Assessment jointly with ORS every three years, independently measure customer satisfaction of vocational rehabilitation results, and jointly measure effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. During this planning year, ORS will provide the SRC with currently available measures of performance, including numbers successfully employed and their demographics, CSAVR benchmark performance and information currently reported to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

ORS effectiveness and progress in improving in meeting goals and objectives will be based on performance standards and indicators adopted by RSA and compatible with Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act performance standards. The goals and objectives adopted in the FFY 2000 Interim Plan were based on the draft performance standards, as are the goals in this Plan.

Following is the ORS report on progress on goals and priorities and innovation and expansion.

A. State's Goals and Priorities Progress

Goal One:

Increase employment outcomes by a minimum of five percent annually.

ORS increased the number of individuals successfully employed in FFY 1999 by seventeen percent to 540. The goal for FFY 2000 is 607. The following report measures the first quarter of FFY 2000.

Objectives:

1.1 Increase number of individuals successfully self-employed, including those individuals eligible for supported employment:

- a. through Request for Proposals (RFP) to vendors
- b. through liaison with the Small Business Administration
- c. through staff training on self-employment planning issues

It is anticipated that staff training will occur in FFY 2000 which will utilize Small Business Administration. There is a standard format for business plans and consumers are encouraged to utilize the consultation services of the Business Information Center of Small Business Administration and Small Business Development Centers.

1.2 Continue Transition Project to coordinate and expand employment opportunities as students transition to adulthood, with continued training and education on to employment.

Transition Project is continuing with contracts with five Educational Collaboratives. It is anticipated that 175 students will receive vocational assessments which include community-based employment assessments.

1.3 Continue and expand Family Independence Learning Disability Project to obtain successful employment for individuals with learning and other disabilities transitioning from Family Independence TANF funding.

The Learning Disability Project provided services to over 100 individuals in FFY 1999 and has received thirty additional referrals in the first quarter of FFY 2000. New service delivery aspects include: the assessment process, tools and vendors, as well as assessment for cultural minorities; assessment of the needs of individuals who are multi-handicapped, identification of many short-term training options; and training public and private staff on identification of learning disabilities.

1.4 Meet Federal standards and indicators and CSAVR benchmarks for competitive employment outcomes through clinical supervision, program monitoring and evaluation, and identifying and applying best practices.

ORS participates in a Regional Committee which is looking at best practices in the New England Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in order to expand application of these practices. Federal standards have not yet been approved. CSAVR benchmarks for 1999 have not yet been publicized. The ORS Work Plan emphasizes clinical supervision.

- 1.5 Increase utilization of on-the-job training annually through identifying 1999 baseline measurement and through provision of clinical supervision.

In FY 1999, there were twenty-five individuals who participated in on-the-job training. This provides the baseline measurement.

- 1.6 Expand interaction with employers in order to understand the changing labor market, through the SRC Employment Committee, One-Stop partnership, and staff training.

Quarterly Employment meetings provide all staff with updated information on employment needs. ORS now has representation on the Human Resources Investment Council Labor Market Information Committee. All One-Stops, i.e., netWORKri, centers will have employer services committees with employers as guest speakers. One Center has implemented this committee. ORS has a representative on one of the local Workforce Investment Council boards. ORS participates in Projects With Industry employer meetings. The State Rehabilitation Council Employment Committee is exploring their role in the Workforce Investment Act.

- 1.7 Maintain individuals in the rehabilitation process, annually reduce percent of individuals closed not rehabilitated through developing and implementing a strategy.

The ORS Work Plan for this year includes closer clinical supervision of this element. ORS tracking of FFY 2000 first quarter results indicates approximately the same number of closures as the prior year's first quarter. It will take a period of time to change this outcome.

- 1.8 Implement consistent use of benefit analysis throughout the rehabilitation process.

Clinical supervision and staff training are the first steps in implementing this.

- 1.9 Expand service delivery options for Informed Choice.

ORS is exploring how best to expand service delivery options. The training policy has been modified to make short-term training easier to implement. A Resource Guide is being developed to assist in Informed Choice. Consumers use of One-Stop computers provides information for career exploration. A Resource Room for consumer use at ORS is being implemented.

- 1.10 Annually increase percentage of individuals employed 20 or more hours per week through developing and implementing a strategy.

This project has not yet been initiated.

- 1.11 Advocate for hiring Rehabilitation Counselors with Master's Degrees and for bi-lingual staff.

Presently, ORS houses a satellite Master's Degree program with Rehabilitation Counselors enrolled. Civil Service and Union rules would need to be changed to provide for hiring of individuals with the requisite Master's Degree. The Cultural Diversity Cadre is advocating for including a preference for bi-lingual staff in job postings.

Goal Two:

Increase the service and employment outcome ratios for minority populations.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Annually develop vendor relationships, including Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with one to two community organizations which primarily serve minority populations.

This initiative has not yet been started.

- 2.2 Utilize Cultural Diversity Cadre ORS staff members to sample and review Agency performance relative to service patterns and outcomes.

The Cultural Diversity Cadre had their first FFY2000 quarterly meeting at which they reviewed the ORS goals and strategies related to participation and employment outcomes by minority populations in order to establish a baseline.

Ensure that One-Stop system outreaches and facilitates employment outcomes of minorities, including minorities with disabilities, in approximate proportion to community demographics of minority populations.

This initiative has not yet been initiated.

- 2.3 Advocate for bi-lingual staff when recruiting for all Agency positions.

The Cultural Diversity Cadre plans to meet with Administration regarding the need for a preference for bilingual staff.

- 2.4 Advocate for bi-lingual staff when recruiting for all Agency positions.

Goal Three:

Increase the level of customer satisfaction at three key points in the rehabilitation process.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Develop Request for Proposals (RFP), in cooperation with State Rehabilitation Council, to measure customer satisfaction at beginning, mid-point and termination of ORS services.

The first step for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is contracting for staff assistance in implementing its responsibilities. The SRC has also established a Quality Assurance Committee. ORS has measured customer satisfaction at the beginning of the process for several years and has measured customer satisfaction at the end of the process for many years.

- 3.2 Continue the early intervention strategy through the ORS Customer Relations Office.

The ORS Customer Relations Office received and resolved twenty-one inquiries in the first quarter of FFY 2000.

- 3.3 Develop mediation resources in accordance with the 1998 Amendments.

The draft revision to the ORS Appeals Policy includes mediation.

- 3.4 Develop method for measuring satisfaction with major vendors for utilization with Informed Choice.

This objective has not yet been initiated.

- 3.5 Work with One-Stop partners to ensure that One-Stop customer satisfaction measures include views of customers who are disabled.

Federal standards for the One-Stop system have not yet been approved and disseminated.

Priorities:

- ✓ Increase career planning options and employment services for individuals with disabilities through linkages to the State Workforce Investment System.
- ✓ Improve the delivery of services for individuals with disabilities to provide them with person-centered planning, enhanced consumer choice leading to employment and careers.
- ✓ Streamline the current VR system to make it more efficient, economical, user friendly and easy to access.
- ✓ Increase the access of rehabilitation and information technology to maximize consumer choice of goals and services.
- ✓ Develop specialized VR services for Family Independence Program (FIP) beneficiaries with Learning Disabilities.

B. Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities Progress

Goal 1: Increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island

Objective 1: Create a vital partnership with the business community to better understand business needs and how ORS can help meet them.

ORS developed a new display which was utilized at the annual Business Expo in 1999. Staff participated in the EXPO in 1999, SBVI Employer Breakfast, and other business meetings. Quarterly staff meetings with speakers from business and unions are conducted to increase knowledge of the labor market and employer relations.

It is anticipated that One-Stop partnering will lead to increased interaction with employers. New Counselors' training has included exercises involving contacting employers for marketing purposes and doing job analysis. It is planned to develop a relationship with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to expand employment opportunities for non-English speaking individuals.

Objective 2: Expand consumer employment preparation options through partnerships with other agencies and with employers for efficient use of resources.

ORS Transition Project utilizes Title I Expansion funds to provide new service delivery patterns for individuals transitioning from secondary school. One-hundred fifty students statewide participated in hands-on career

exploration activities through five educational collaboratives in 1999, and it is anticipated that 175 will participate in 2000. The results are used for student-centered planning. ORS has two staff positions dedicated to the Transition Project to work on coordination between agencies and State Departments and to work on system change.

Another major initiative is the involvement of ORS with the U. S. Department of Labor One-Stop Project (netWORKri) in order to assure universal access to One-Stop Career Centers and expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including minority populations. ORS has a staff member on the Steering Committee and staff stationed on a rotating basis at the four Centers which have opened.

A partnership project between the DHS Family Independence Program and ORS is operational. The purpose is to identify individuals transitioning from TANF funding who were previously undiagnosed as having Learning Disabilities and provide remediation, rehabilitation services, including reasonable accommodations, and match individuals with jobs and needed support services. Nationally, 31% of individuals on welfare have Learning Disabilities. ORS has one staff person dedicated to this project and DHS has one staff person. In 1999, the first year, 50 individuals were identified and started through the streamlined process. It has been found that most of the individuals have multiple disabilities. This project grew out of a regional leadership training program.

Objective 3: Expand and Improve staff competencies related to employment outcomes.

Training opportunities to expand competencies have included several Department of Labor and Training sponsored training, including employer relations, overcoming barriers to employment, improving career decision-making, and resumes for hard to serve individuals. Americans With Disabilities Act, marketing principles, and employment issues related to specific disabilities were other subjects of training.

Objective 4: To expand utilization of rehabilitation technology to facilitate employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. (Also see Goal 2, Objective 3.)

Annual training is provided to staff and community rehabilitation programs to become knowledgeable about benefits of technology throughout the rehabilitation process and how to utilize technological resources. Regular consultation is available from technology specialists for individual situations.

Staff are encouraged to view demonstrations and exhibits and attend annual technology conferences to become more knowledgeable about technology. Mentoring is being provided to new Counselors on use of technology resources. Quarterly roundtable meetings have been initiated in FFY2000 to identify and resolve issues related to assistive technology.

Objective 5: Expand the involvement of individuals with disabilities in career decision-making.

Implementation of the Informed Choice policy is the primary focus of this objective. A Resource Manual is being prepared with input from the State Rehabilitation Council. This will include information about cost, accessibility, duration, customer satisfaction with providers, types of services from providers and qualifications of staff. A Resource Room will open shortly which will expand exploration for Informed Choice by individuals with disabilities. Individuals also have access to the One-Stop Resource Rooms. The Transition Project has expanded career student exploration. Options for development of Individualized Plans for Employment are being offered customers and a form has been revised to enhance flexible use.

Goal 2: Increase operational efficiency to conserve limited resources.

Objective 1: Develop vendor service delivery system focused on outcomes.

The pilot project with Goodwill, with fees focused on outcome, was implemented July 1, 1998. A vendor incentive fee for job retention is planned for the schedule. A Memorandum of Agreement system with vendors is planned, as well as clarifying standards of service and reports.

Objective 2: Strengthen collaboration with other State Departments, agencies, and community rehabilitation programs. (Also see Goal 1.)

ORS Cooperative Agreements with State Departments of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH) and Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) continue, and partnerships with Department of Labor and Training One-Stops (netWORKri) and Department of Human Services TANF Family Independence Program. Memorandums of Agreement will be developed with the Workforce Investment Act Boards. Closer collaboration with key community organizations serving minority populations will be the next initiative, including liaison, Memorandums of Agreement, possible fee-for-service, and working with customers in the community environment in which they are comfortable. Cooperative Agreements with Higher Education will be strengthened.

Objective 3: Develop system for timely purchase of adaptive equipment for consumer employment needs.

The increase in purchasing authority to \$2,500 has generally reduced the barrier to timely purchase of adaptive equipment. Implementation of the Master Price Agreement has also increased timeliness. The ATAP project continues to work on system change initiatives.

Objective 4: Develop strategies to meet CSAVR and RSA performance benchmarks.

ORS is working to reach CSAVR benchmarks in a more timely manner through closer supervision. The time from application to eligibility was reduced from 5.6 months to 4.4 months in 1998. The time from application to employment was reduced from 36 months to 33 months in 1998. The statistics for 1999 are not yet available. The RSA performance standards and indicators are expected to be implemented when published. The data progress and outcome reporting system was revised to graphically show Agency performance on key measures.

Objective 5: Regional budgets have not been utilized during the current year. Instead, the focus of supervision has been quarterly reviews of expenditures.

Objective 6: Technology resources provided for staff.

Computer technology has been upgraded to Windows for all staff. An ergonomic assessment occurred for staff work stations. Training on use of the internet has been provided through Department of Labor & Training One-Stops and a user-friendly labor market information computer system is also available there. ORS now has representation on the Labor Market Information Committee of the Workforce Investment Board.

Goal 3: Expand public awareness of ORS programs and contributions to State economy.

A 1999 Annual Report will be widely disseminated. Staff present at local and regional conferences and exhibits. One-Stop marketing lists ORS as a partner. Staff liaisons to numerous agencies present the purpose and results of ORS.

Goal 4: Enhance the role of individuals with disabilities in key Agency processes.

Objective 1: Expand the Office of Customer Relations to provide timely resolution to consumer concerns.

In 1999, 61 customer relations contacts occurred, with 33 complaints resolved and 28 inquiries answered for clarification of policies, procedures, etc. The number of customer relations complaints and inquiries was 50% lower than 1998.

Objective 2: Obtain perspective of individuals with disabilities to increase timeliness and effectiveness of service delivery system and increase employment outcomes.

Annual program evaluation data is collected by ORS from all individuals closed who become employed and those who do not. Quarterly samples of consumer satisfaction are obtained after Intake. The SRC will measure consumer satisfaction of ORS results. Individuals with disabilities have been involved in Agency committees, contract reviews, policy development, etc. ORS is implementing the 1998 Amendments relative to advising customers of their rights, supporting them in implementing Informed Choice options through development of a Resource Guide in both print and internet formats, and options in developing their Individualized Plans for Employment.

ATTACHMENT 4.16(b)(2)

MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES

To meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended, the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (RI ORS) is updating the policy to assure that disputes arising between personnel of RI ORS and an applicant or eligible individual with a disability are resolved in a fair, equitable, and timely manner. Specifically, Section 115.12 (revised draft 9/99) of the Policy and Procedural Manual, entitled, "Appeals/Impartial Due Process," (Hearing and Mediation) provides Agency staff with the direction that will ensure that the rights of each applicant and individual with a disability are safeguarded; and the matter under dispute is resolved in compliance with law and regulation.

Any applicant or eligible individual with a disability, or his/her representative, is advised in writing of their rights to a review of, or mediation regarding, the determination (decision) made by the ORS that affects the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. In addition they are advised of the availability of a Supervisory or Customer Relations conference to discuss the decision made by the representative of the state agency.

Each applicant and eligible individual with a disability is advised at application, when the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed, and at reduction, suspension or cessation of vocational rehabilitation services of his/her right to due process through an Impartial Due Process Hearing, optional Mediation, and the availability of assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

Any applicant or eligible individual with a disability, or his/her representative, is advised in writing of his/her right to appeal any decision regarding the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The process to resolve disputes consists of the following options and may be resolved at any level. The first option is offered to the applicant or eligible individual with a disability but is not required in order to select mediation and/or due process hearing to resolve the dispute. The applicant or eligible individual with a disability may choose to request:

1. A Supervisory or Customer Service Conference prior to requesting, or in addition to requesting, any other means to resolve disputes; or
2. Mediation, if also agreed to by the ORS representative, without requesting a Due Process Hearing; or

3. Mediation, if also agreed to by the ORS representative, in addition to requesting the Due Process Hearing; or
4. The applicant or individual with a disability may choose to request only an Impartial Due Process Hearing.

An applicant or an individual with a disability who requests an Impartial Due Process Hearing must do so in writing within 30 days of the decision that is in dispute. The Hearing will be scheduled within 45 days of the request. If the applicant or individual with a disability chooses mediation, and mediation is agreed to by the agency representative, the mediation session, resulting in either a signed agreement or lack of agreement, by the parties will take place within 15 days of the request. At all levels of the Due Process, the applicant or eligible individual with a disability has the right to submit evidence and be represented by an individual of his/her choice.

The Mediator shall be chosen from a list of qualified impartial Mediators knowledgeable in laws and regulations governing the provision of Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation services. All discussions during mediation shall be confidential and conducted in a manner accommodating to the applicant or eligible individual with a disability. If an agreement is reached, it will be put into writing. Each party will receive a copy of the agreement within fifteen (15) days of the session. If the applicant or eligible individual with a disability has not reached agreement to his/her satisfaction, and has not yet requested an Impartial Due Process Hearing, he/she may request a Hearing in writing up to 30 days after the date of the written decision/determination that he/she is disputing.

The Due Process Hearing is conducted by a qualified Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) in the Department of Human Services. A Hearing will be held within forty-five (45) days of the initial request. The applicant or individual with a disability will be notified in writing of the date, location and time of the Hearing. The Hearing will be held at a site to reasonably accommodate the applicant or eligible individual with a disability. A written decision that is based on provision of the approved State Plan, Federal law and regulations, and State regulations and procedures that are consistent with Federal requirements will be provided within thirty (30) days of the completion of the Hearing.

Either party may request a review of the Impartial Hearing Officer's decision within twenty (20) days after the decision. The reviewing official shall provide the opportunity for submission of additional evidence and information relevant to a formal decision. The reviewing official shall not overturn or modify the IHO's decision, or part of the decision, that supports the position of the applicant or eligible individual unless the reviewing official concludes, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the decision of the IHO is clearly erroneous on the basis of being contrary to the approved State Plan, Federal or State law, regulations or policy that is consistent with the Rehabilitation Act, as Amended. The reviewing official shall make a decision and provide it in writing, including the grounds for the decision, to the applicant or eligible individual, or as appropriate, the applicant or

individual's representative, and to the Office of Rehabilitation Services. The review is conducted by the Director of the Department of Human Services. The reviewing official shall render a final administrative decision within thirty (30) days of the initial request of the review.

If dissatisfied with the final decision, the applicant or individual with a disability may file for a Judicial Review in accordance with Rhode Island General Law 42-35-15 by filing a complaint in the Superior Court of Providence County within thirty (30) days of the mailing of the final Agency decision. All decisions by the IHO and reviewing official are sent to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

ATTACHMENT 4.12(c)(1)

STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Goal One:

Increase employment outcomes by a minimum of five percent annually.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Increase number of individuals successfully self-employed, including those individuals eligible for supported employment:
 - a. through Request for Proposals (RFP) to vendors
 - d. through liaison with Small Business Administration
 - e. through staff training on self-employment planning issues
- 1.2 Continue Transition Project to coordinate and expand employment opportunities as students transition to adulthood, with continued training and education on to employment.
- 1.3 Continue and expand Family Independence Learning Disability Project to obtain successful employment for individuals with learning and other disabilities transitioning from Family Independence TANF funding.
- 1.4 Meet Federal standards and indicators and CSAVR benchmarks for competitive employment outcomes through clinical supervision, program monitoring and evaluation, and identifying and applying best practices.
- 1.5 Increase utilization of on-the-job training annually through identifying 1999 baseline measurement and through provision or clinical supervision.
- 1.6 Expand interaction with employers in order to understand the changing labor market, through the SRC Employment Committee, One-Stop partnership, and staff training.

- 1.7 Maintain individuals in the rehabilitation process, annually reduce percent of individuals closed not rehabilitated through developing and implementing a strategy.
- 1.8 Implement consistent use of benefit analysis throughout the rehabilitation process.
- 1.9 Expand service delivery options for Informed Choice.
- 1.10 Annually increase percentage of individuals employed 20 or more hours per week through developing and implementing a strategy.
- 1.11 Advocate for hiring Rehabilitation Counselors with Master's Degrees and for bi-lingual staff.

Goal Two:

Increase the service and employment outcome ratios for minority populations.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Annually develop vendor relationships, including Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with one to two community organizations which primarily serve minority populations.
- 2.2 Utilize Cultural Diversity Cadre ORS staff members to sample and review Agency performance relative to service patterns and outcomes.
- 2.3 Ensure that One-Stop system outreaches and facilitates employment outcomes of minorities, including minorities with disabilities, in approximate proportion to community demographics of minority populations.
- 2.4 Advocate for bi-lingual staff when recruiting for all Agency positions.

Goal Three:

Increase the level of customer satisfaction at three key points in the rehabilitation process.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Develop Request for Proposals (RFP), in cooperation with State Rehabilitation Council, to measure customer satisfaction at beginning, mid-point and termination of ORS services.

- 3.2 Continue the early intervention strategy through the ORS Customer Relations Office.
- 3.3 Develop mediation resources in accordance with the 1998 Amendments.
- 3.4 Develop method for measuring satisfaction with major vendors for utilization with Informed Choice.
- 3.5 Work with One-Stop partners to ensure that One-Stop customer satisfaction measures include views of customers who are disabled.

Priorities:

- ✓ Increase career planning options and employment services for individuals with disabilities through linkages to the State Workforce Investment System.
- ✓ Improve the delivery of services for individuals with disabilities to provide them with person-centered planning, enhanced consumer choice leading to employment and careers.
- ✓ Streamline the current VR system to make it more efficient, economical, user friendly and easy to access.
- ✓ Increase the access of rehabilitation and information technology to maximize consumer choice of goals and services.
- ✓ Develop specialized VR services for Family Independence Program (FIP) beneficiaries with Learning Disabilities.

ATTACHMENT 4.12(d)

**STATE'S STRATEGIES AND USE OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION
AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES**

ORS strategies and use of Title I funds for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, were determined based on needs assessment. Following are the strategies and use of Title I funds well beyond the required 1.5% for innovation and expansion to increase employment outcomes:

- Expand employment options through: a) increasing the number of individuals successfully self-employed, including individuals who are eligible for supported employment, through a Request for Proposals to vendors for mini-grants; b) identifying and implementing a user-friendly labor market information system; c) increasing knowledge of the changing labor market through mentoring ORS staff with regular contacts with employers, utilizing ORS mentors, One-Stop employer representatives, and SRC Employment Committee members.
- Continue the Transition Project to provide technical assistance to school systems and expand employment opportunities through new service delivery options for the transition of students with disabilities to employment.
- Expand the Family Independence Learning Disability Project to obtain employment for individuals with learning and other disabilities transitioning from Family Independence TANF funding and develop in-house expertise in planning employment with individuals with Learning Disabilities.
- Incorporate transportation planning for employment into Individualized Employment Plans. Pilot a peer travel training project for adults and advocate for travel training in IEPs.
- Expand service options (including CRPs), including for minority populations, for career exploration, employment preparation and employment outcomes, through developing Memorandums of Agreement with current and additional vendors which clarify service

standards and expectations. Develop and implement a strategy to increase the supply and retention of job coaches. Increase the number of vendors serving minority populations through fee-for-service and/or contracts. Develop service options equitably throughout the State, including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs).

- Ensure that rehabilitation technology is considered throughout the rehabilitation process through staff training, mentoring and clinical supervision; through vendor qualifications; and through consumer awareness of the benefits of technology.
- Develop strategies for increased Informed Choice, including decision-making training, user-friendly resource materials, and criteria for developing Individualized Employment Plans.
- Improve performance annually of RSA Performance Standards and Indicators through developing new monitoring report and clinical supervision by Supervisors.
- Strengthen WIA partnerships through facilitating networking and training sessions that will build linkages among One-Stop System Partners, PWI, Community Rehabilitation Programs that are not in the Workforce system, and with ORS staff that will result in increased numbers of individuals with disabilities becoming employed.
- Work with the State Rehabilitation Council to assess customer satisfaction with the services through the One-Stop Career System.
- Support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council upon development of a resource plan.
- In conjunction with the State's Assistive Technology Project (ATAP), develop pilot project that will coordinate a peer network related to providing information and supports related to assistive technology and informed choice.

ATTACHMENT 4.11(b)

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Rehabilitation Services currently has ninety-two authorized positions within its VR/SBVI units. The types of positions contained within this FTE reflect the administrative, direct service and support staffing needs of the Agency in order to operate an effective and efficient program. Our current client-to-counselor ratio is approximately 105 to one. The Agency has lowered this ratio by instituting an Order of Selection criteria, reorganizing the case distribution process, and developing cooperative agreements with other State departments, allowing ORS to hire additional personnel utilizing their State funds and FTE equivalents. It is expected that the Agency will lose approximately 50% of its current staff to attrition and retirement over the next five years. In that event, we will need to replace at least that minimum number of personnel. For this reason, ORS has developed a comprehensive staff development plan designed to address both current and future staffing needs.

As part of this effort, the Agency will be refining a data system to closely track future personnel needs, which will include information on numbers of staff positions, number of staff required, anticipated retirements, staff required to earn an advanced degree, with associated timelines where necessary.

1. The goal of the Agency's Human Resource Development program is to create a positive human resource climate which will facilitate the integration of immediate and long-range organizational objectives with the personal growth goals of individual agency staff. The expectation is that with a coordinated, relevant program over a planned continuum, Rhode Island will have a highly qualified staff to provide mandated services.
2. The Human Resources Director will make every effort to address training needs either directly through the resources provided by training grants or through similar benefits. In particular, the current and future focus of training is on providing adequate opportunities for staff to develop the highest level of skills to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

With the passage of the '98 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, ORS is concentrating on developing training programs and initiatives to ensure that all professional and para-professional staff acquire the necessary credentials to perform their job duties with the highest degree of skill. A review of the existing

job requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has begun. In addition, individuals who have not already earned a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation are expected to matriculate into the satellite program developed collaboratively with Assumption College. Those who have a Master's Degree in a related field will be expected to complete graduate level courses in specific core areas to develop the skills and acquire the knowledge essential to effective job performance. Individual Development Plans will be written to ensure that suitable progress is being made toward achievement of a goal that all staff will possess the highest level of skills – Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

The Assumption College Satellite Master's Program has already graduated seventeen ORS staff. A new cycle began on September 1, 1999. There are currently nine ORS staff who are either already matriculated, or are in the process of matriculation. The expected completion date is August, 2001. Other ORS staff who do not possess a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation, or a closely related field, will **NOT** be able to sign IPEs as of October 1, 1999.

The RSA Region I RRCEP is planning to offer a certificate program for those Rehabilitation Counselors who have a Master's Degree in a closely related field, but need core courses to be a qualified Rehabilitation Counselor. ORS staff who need these courses are expected to enroll in this program.

Outlined below is a profile of the thirty-nine (39) Rehabilitation Counselor positions allocated to the Office of Rehabilitation Services for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and their educational status:

- 17 staff with Master's Degree in Counseling;
- 3 staff with related Master's Degree that will be encouraged to take the necessary courses through the Certificate Program established through the Region I RCEP;
- 8 counseling staff in the current satellite Master's Program held at the Office of Rehabilitation Services with expected completion in August 2001;
- 3 staff to retire within the next six months;
- 4 staff with Bachelor's Degree that need to develop a CSPD plan;
- 3 vacant positions approved for recruitment.

Along with this effort, on-going training in all aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process as well as in the philosophical and operational aspects of managing the vocational rehabilitation program is vital to an efficient, effective, and accountable program.

The following breakdown of objectives will outline training methodologies and suggested formats.

- a. Improve staff competency in the areas of job finding and labor market skills and techniques in order to increase the successful integrated, competitive employment of individuals with significant disabilities.
- b. Increase the knowledge and skills of the staff in dealing with the employment and independent living issues involved with serving those individuals who are the most significantly disabled including individuals with sensory impairments and/or dual disabilities.
- c. Improve staff understanding of appropriate use of various employment options in the context of the present vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs in order to increase vocational outcomes for VR clients.
- d. Enhance staff knowledge of the use of technology including the changing myriad of available "low" and "high" technological aids, devices and appliances to be used in a variety of settings to assist individuals in gaining or regaining employment. Increase staff use of rehabilitation technologists in the evaluation, planning and job finding phases of the VR process.
- e. Improve staff knowledge concerning the impact of various types of disabilities (i.e. HIV, substance abuse, TBI, etc.) on the individual and techniques of functional assessment to be applied to home, community and vocational settings.
- f. Develop supervisory and upper management skills in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, organizational development, clinical supervision, effective use of consultants, managing change, motivational skills, labor relations, ethical issues, and budget preparation and analysis.
- g. Improve staff knowledge of the capability and utilization of computer and word processing equipment and the application of such equipment to the maintenance of records, statistical reporting, accounting and database management.
- h. Begin to prepare interested staff for positions of greater responsibility by assisting in the development of skills necessary to the successful transition of the agency from a process-oriented organization to an outcome oriented one.

- i. Continue training in the development and enhancement of higher skill and competency levels of all staff in all facets of the rehabilitation process in order to enhance appropriate and timely services to all individuals with disabilities. The expectation is that with appropriate and timely services, counselors and consumers can focus on employment-related issues and effect better employment outcomes.
3. The Office of Rehabilitation Services has a proactive affirmative action plan as well as policies for hiring individuals with disabilities, women, and members of racial or ethnic minority groups. The Agency actively works with the Affirmative Action Units within the various State Departments, the State Division of Personnel, as well as various community groups in an effort to recruit, hire and/or train members of minority groups and individuals with disabilities. The Agency currently has several staff members who are of diverse ethnic backgrounds and/or have a disability. These individuals perform duties within their job specifications and also function as liaisons with their respective communities. An individual with knowledge and skills relative to hearing impairments has been hired for the position of Counselor for the Deaf. Training for this individual is provided in an accessible format focusing on their individual needs. Sign language interpreters are employed whenever necessary to facilitate communication between customers and ORS, or at public meetings conducted by the Agency. Also, materials are provided to staff or Agency customers in Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer disk.

In addition, staff fluent in such foreign languages as Spanish, Cambodian, and Portuguese assist with communication to ensure that services are provided most effectively. Agency forms have been translated into the most commonly requested foreign languages.

4. The Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services has begun an active process of revising its job descriptions for Rehabilitation Counselor, Senior Rehabilitation Counselor and Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf. Meetings have taken place with the State Office of Personnel, and proposed changes have been made, requiring a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or closely related degree, such as Counselor Education, Special Education, Psychology, or Sociology, for entry level for these job classifications. When proposed changes are instituted, only those individuals who have an academic background in rehabilitation or a closely related field will be allowed to apply for civil service exams. These changes will require the support of the State Office of Personnel, as well as the Union, which represents the job classification. The process of approval involves a public hearing as well.

5. ORS has developed a Cooperative Agreement with the Rhode Island Department of Education to ensure that outreach and appropriate vocational rehabilitation services will be provided to students with disabilities. Also, ORS is an active member of the State Improvement Plan for Special Education. This includes the linkage with CSPD for both ORS staff and education personnel.
 - a. With new initiatives proposed under IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Rhode Island Department of Education, Special Education Unit will continue to develop new strategies including a coordinated plan of in-service training for both professional staffs.
 - b. Within the Department of Education, staff development has been and continues to be a task of the Transitional Planning Council. In the past, this council has had the responsibility of providing training to educational and rehabilitation professionals in the implementation of cooperative agreements and transition services, including definition, purpose, and benefits. Parents have also been included in the training process especially regarding transition services. The council, in coordination with the Office of Rehabilitation Services, will develop a schedule of cross training relative to Rehabilitation Act Amendments and the requirements of IDEA. These sessions will include topics such as transition, rehabilitation technology, extended evaluation from the rehabilitation perspective, the role of technology in the classroom, impact of Order of Selection on the student population, disability awareness training and developing strategies for expanding transition services.
6. The current Human Resource Development Plan for staff at the Office of Rehabilitation Services includes an extensive annual Needs Assessment covering many topic areas and reflecting, in order of priority, staff choices relative to improving overall personal and professional performance. Supervisors and Administrators are consulted regularly to identify staff strengths and weaknesses and develop plans to correct areas of inadequacy. The Program Evaluation component of the Agency also provides information regarding training needs. Extensive in-service training opportunities are provided to all staff, including an orientation program for new staff. ORS, along with the RRCEP, have developed an extensive training program for new counselors encompassing all major aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process. Individuals who require and/or request additional course work are encouraged to utilize the continuing education programs available from a variety of institutions within the State, as well as various workshops and

seminars available in the community. In order to maximize the benefit of training Agency-wide, the Human Resources Director will be promulgating a list of training activities and staff attending the training, so that those individuals can be resources to others.

- a. The Agency will: 1) evaluate the staff human resource needs at all levels; 2) provide or coordinate activities which will assist personnel in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance; and 3) evaluate the results of the human resource program to ensure the effective delivery of quality rehabilitation services to Agency clientele.
- b. The Office of Rehabilitation Services has also set benchmarks and standards based on a "Best Practices" concept of service delivery. Performance appraisals are linked to Individual Development Plans which are negotiated between the worker, his/her immediate supervisor, and if necessary, the Human Resources Director.
- c. The ORS has been acquiring technology designed to assist the agency to operate in a more efficient and effective manner by increased utilization of personnel resources for actual service delivery. New technology will also allow for more timely and inclusive access to national human resource development opportunities and programs such as the regional RRCEP's and other RSA funded programs, other professional programs, and various new and emerging concepts and strategies designed to build competencies and increase outcomes. ORS will continue to increase staff knowledge on the capacity and utilization of computer equipment including effective use of various programs, networking systems, database information and the application of such equipment to the maintenance of records, statistical reporting, accounting and data-base management. Computer training is an ongoing activity within the overall staff development plan of ORS. Special training is purchased whenever necessary to upgrade skills in advanced hardware and software technology.
- d. ORS will continue to support the development and enhancement of higher skill and competency levels of all staff in all facets of the vocational rehabilitation process to insure adequate service delivery systems are in place to serve the target population.
- e. ORS will continue to focus on activities related to job development, marketing skills and job finding strategies in order to increase the successful integrated, competitive employment of individuals with significant disabilities.

- f. ORS will continue to train current staff as well as recruit and hire new staff in order to increase the knowledge base of the organization in meeting the needs of culturally diverse populations. Whenever possible, ORS will make every effort to recruit and hire qualified individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds to ensure adequate outreach and service delivery to these populations.
- g. ORS will continue to increase staff knowledge of appropriate uses of various employment options in order to increase vocational outcomes for VR clients. These activities will be accomplished through collaboration and cooperation with a variety of community activities and programs through attendance at various seminars in the local area as well as activities sponsored by the RRCEP.
 - 1. The University Affiliated Program will continue to offer workshops over the course of the year. Many ORS staff persons, especially those whose caseloads reflect a high percentage of individuals with developmental disabilities, will attend these workshops throughout the year.
 - 2. The Agency sponsors mandatory quarterly employment meetings to which a variety of guest speakers who present employment strategies and initiatives that have resulted in increasing employment outcomes are invited. For example, a panel of Human Resource Directors representing various industries (i.e., temporary employment agencies, manufacturing, banking, publishing) offered their perspective on what basic skills potential employees need even for entry level positions and how one can make the best impression during the interview.
 - 3. The Office of Rehabilitation Services has developed a cooperative agreement with the R. I. Department of Labor and Training in order to share resources including training opportunities. ORS staff will plan to attend a variety of workshops related to increasing employment outcomes.
- h. In cooperation and collaboration with the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP), ORS will continue to enhance staff knowledge of the use of technology including the changing myriad of available "low" and "high" technological aids, devices and appliances to be used in a variety of settings to assist individuals in gaining or regaining their independence. A short-term goal is to increase staff use of rehabilitation technology consultants in the evaluation, planning and job finding phases of the VR process.
- i. ORS will continue to increase staff knowledge relative to the impact of various types of disabilities (i.e. HIV, Substance Abuse, TBI, Psychiatric Disabilities, etc). Strategies learned will assist staff to apply techniques of functional assessment that can be applied to home, community and vocational settings.

- j. ORS will continue to prepare interested staff for positions of greater responsibility by assisting them in setting goals and working out plans for the development of skills necessary for the successful transition from one area of responsibility to another. ORS offers a menu of training opportunities from which staff may choose a myriad of options from basic competency building to working toward undergraduate and graduate degrees.
- k. ORS will continue to expand the knowledge base of current supervisory personnel as well as preparing interested others for future roles of greater responsibility by developing management skills in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, organizational development, clinical supervision, managing change, motivational skills, labor relations, ethical issues, and budget preparation and analysis.
 - 1. Nine ORS staff have completed the New England Leadership Series, developed collaboratively by Assumption College and the University of Oklahoma, in order to develop their leadership and management skills for the future. In addition, four ORS staff members are currently participating in the Leadership program.
- l. ORS will continue the coordination of training activities with the Department of Education and local collaborative for the skill enhancement of VR and Special Education personnel in order to effect successful transition of students with special needs from school-to-work.
- m. Since no Rehabilitation Counselor undergraduate or graduate program currently exists in any of the colleges or universities in Rhode Island, the Office of Rehabilitation Services negotiated with Assumption College in Worcester, MA. and the Rhode Island Department of Higher Education to provide a Master's level accredited satellite program within the Office of Rehabilitation Services. This two-year program began in September of 1992 and has graduated a total of 17 ORS staff members as of August, 1998 (total graduates of the program = more than 30). Since a significant number of new counselors who have been hired by ORS do not have an advanced degree in Rehabilitation, several steps have been taken to provide the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to perform the job satisfactorily.
 - 1. "New Counselor Training" has been developed by the RRCEP which includes the areas of marketing, vocational assessment, ethics, counseling theory, assistive technology, etc. Three graduate credits are being offered for those completing course requirements beyond the basics.

2. All counselors without a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation or a closely related field are expected to matriculate into the satellite program through Assumption College.
 3. Those individuals with degrees in a closely related field will be expected to successfully complete graduate level courses in specific core areas such as vocational assessment, vocational counseling, medical aspects of disability, psychological aspects of disability, occupational analysis and labor market information, needed to develop the skills and knowledge for satisfactory job performance.
 4. In addition, Assumption College has been awarded three Grants for Masters programs via distance learning.
7. As medical, legal, social, economic and technological changes place new demands on various systems and research indicates the need for new trends in service delivery, the Agency will need to redefine job duties and create new positions to more effectively and efficiently provide quality services. ORS also plans to develop a paraprofessional category of workers whose responsibilities will be to perform many of the technical aspects of the counselor's job and allow counselors more time to work on the clinical aspects such as guidance, counseling and job finding activities for individuals with the most significant disabilities. This new category may create a career development opportunity for current support personnel. ORS is working with the Region I RRCEP to develop a series of competency based training modules as a strategy to address this need.
8. In order to ensure that there is input from the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the CSPD efforts of the State Agency, a Committee of the Council has been re-defined to include on-going involvement with the Agency's training activities. The Council has already provided recommendations for improvement of the "New Counselor Training" which have been incorporated into the curriculum.

