

## **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

### **State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation & Supported Employment Services Federal Fiscal Years 2014-2016**

#### **Attachment 4.11(d) State's strategies to achieve goals and priorities; to support innovation and expansion; and to overcome barriers, to the extent they exist, to access to services**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has established the following major goals for FFY 2014-2016:

1. Kansans with disabilities will achieve quality, competitive, integrated employment and self-sufficiency.
2. KRS, its consumers, providers and partners will be accountable for the achievement of employment and the effective use of resources.
3. KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.
4. KRS will emphasize the meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, public/private partners, employers and other stakeholders in KRS programs, services and activities.

These goals, related strategies and data indicators are addressed in detail in Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

To assure implementation, KRS will use a "strategies to actions" planning process. This process establishes annual priorities, and uses a logic model to identify specific action steps that will be implemented, persons responsible, start dates, due dates, issues and risks that might impact implementation, deliverables (products or results of work effort), and measurable impact on outcomes and indicators. Each region develops such an action plan to assure that focused attention is given to accomplishing the agency's goals and priorities.

#### **Methods to expand and improve services**

When considering opportunities to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, KRS emphasizes strategies that will address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities and people who have been unserved or under-served. Collaborative efforts with consumers, advisory councils, parent groups, advocacy organizations, community rehabilitation programs and other state agencies are undertaken

to expand access to VR services and to promote supported employment, transition planning and assistive technology services.

Innovation and expansion activities are consistent with the findings of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Specifically, the following functions assist KRS in achieving its goals and priorities related to innovation and expansion:

*Workforce development system:* KRS field management staff continue to be part of the Local Workforce Investment Boards, allowing for communication, interagency planning, and cross-informational training to occur with other components of the workforce development system, including One-Stop operators and partner programs. This collaboration is intended to improve access to these services for individuals with disabilities so that they can fully benefit from all the advantages of the system. Memorandums of understanding address issues such as referral procedures and itinerant staffing at one-stops.

*Innovation, continuous improvement and expansion:* KRS promotes expanded community capacity to provide services for people with disabilities through service provider agreements for supported employment, job placement, discovery/supported employment, community-based work assessments, community-based job tryouts, assistive technology, rehabilitation teaching, orientation/mobility and a variety of customer support functions. In addition, KRS staff serve on numerous commissions, advisory boards and interdisciplinary teams to stay current with the needs of people with disabilities, and to identify opportunities for collaborative efforts to improve services. KRS also provides administrative support and direct expenses totaling about \$20,000 annually for operation of the State Rehabilitation Council. This funding arrangement is consistent with 34 CFR 361.35.

*Services for unserved or underserved populations:* Current activities include the following:

- Cooperative working relationships between the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services oversight units for community developmental disability organizations and community mental health centers address capacity to provide supported employment services.
- KRS and DCF Economic and Employment Services continue to collaborate to serve recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who have disabilities.

- KRS and DCF Prevention and Protection Services will coordinate to address the employment and/or post-secondary education needs of youth with disabilities who have been in foster care.
- In-service training will focus on best practices in service delivery for persons who are blind or visually impaired, persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders, persons with traumatic brain injury, persons with disabilities who have a criminal background, and persons with mental illness. Contracted service providers will be included in these training opportunities whenever possible to enhance their expertise in service VR consumers.

*Services for transition-aged youth with disabilities:* Improving outreach and outcomes for transition-aged youth with disabilities is a major focus for KRS.

- All regions conduct outreach to students, parents and schools. Some examples include: scheduling specific days for counselors to work at schools and meet with students and transition staff; participating in activities such as Job Olympics; participating in local transition councils; and operating informational booths at transition fairs or parent-teacher events. As a result of increased outreach and services, about 24% of the total persons served are youth with disabilities (FFY 2012).
- KRS provides \$160,050 in state-only funding support to the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy through a contract that provides for outreach activities; training and education on the disability rights movement and disability pride to schools and other organizations; the Youth Leadership Forum; and mentoring with students with disabilities.

*Services for people who are blind or visually impaired:* To expand and improve the capacity for community-based organizations to provide rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, communications instruction, and assistive technology for persons who are blind or visually impaired, KRS funding a capacity-building contract from FFY 2010 to 2012. These contracts resulted in four additional individuals receiving certification in Orientation and Mobility services, thus increasing access. Additional resources were also developed for rehabilitation teaching and Braille instruction services.

*Competitive, integrated employment for people with the most significant intellectual disabilities:* One of the major strategic goals of KRS is to empower people with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment and self-sufficiency. To advance this vision for people with the

most significant intellectual disabilities, KRS implemented a systems change initiative in FFY 2010. The purposes of the initiative are to:

- Promote and implement replicable models of service delivery and systems change strategies that result in competitive, integrated employment for an increased number of individuals with developmental disabilities who are in sheltered workshops, on waiting lists for waiver services, or in non-work day services.
- Promote a cultural and organizational shift among service providers with a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.
- Establish long-term evidence-based best practices.

The University of Kansas Center for Developmental Disabilities and Virginia Commonwealth University provided training, technical assistance and evaluation. KRS is currently analyzing next steps and potential expansion of this initiative.

*Cooperative agreements:* Consistent with the Goals and Priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1), Rehabilitation Services (RS) will pursue opportunities to establish third-party cooperative agreements with other state programs. The purpose of such an initiative will be to increase the use of evidence-based practices resulting in competitive, integrated employment for persons eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Through such agreements, the partnering state programs would furnish non-federal funds to match available federal VR dollars. This collaborative approach would allow RS and other state programs serving persons with disabilities to strategically invest funds to pursue increased employment and reduced reliance on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers and other public assistance programs. The target populations would include persons receiving services or on the waiting lists for the Developmental Disabilities and Physical Disabilities HCBS waivers, persons with mental illness, and persons receiving SSI, SSDI or other public assistance.

If such third-party cooperative agreements would be established, RS anticipates working with the partnering programs to issue competitive Requests for Proposals to provide funding for evidenced based employment services to Community Developmental Disability Organizations, Community Mental Health Centers, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and affiliated service providers statewide. Employment focused performance-based contracts would be issued and monitored under the administrative supervision of RS as specified in 34 CFR 361.28.

## **Assuring access to assistive technology**

KRS policy and practice assures that the assistive technology needs of VR consumers are considered at every stage of the rehabilitation process, and that equipment, devices or services are provided to meet individual consumer needs.

KRS has established assistive technology service provider agreements with eight organizations throughout the state. This process has improved geographic access to services when compared to FFY 2007. Through this provider agreement process, individual consumers are referred for services such as assessment, functional analysis, training or technical assistance according to their specific needs and goals. Through such a process, consumers have the opportunity to review and analyze assistive technology options and make informed choices about specific services or equipment to meet their needs. Equipment purchases may then be included on Individual Plans for Employment and purchased through VR funds.

## **Outreach procedures**

Within available staff resources, outreach activities are undertaken by regional KRS offices to assure that persons from minority backgrounds and from potentially underserved populations have information about VR services.

KRS maintains an active presence on numerous councils and committees, including:

- The Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas.
- The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns.
- The Vocational Sub-Committee of the Governor's Behavioral Health Planning Council.
- The Governor's Commission on Autism.
- The Working Healthy (Medicaid buy-in program) Advisory Council.
- The Assistive Technology Advisory Committee.
- The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

This involvement facilitates the provision of information about VR services to other disability service organizations, and often results in additional outreach activities or specific referrals.

VR counselors participate, within available resources, in Individual Education Plan meetings for transition-aged youth with disabilities to assure that they have information about VR services and how to apply.

### **Plans to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs**

The State of Kansas currently has no plans to establish new community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). KRS continues to offer opportunities for CRPs to partner in the provision of VR services through service provider agreements.

### **Improving performance related to standards and indicators**

In addition to the specific action planning described above related to achieving agency goals and priorities, in 2010 KRS implemented a new Performance Management Process establishing individual expectations and evaluation standards for all staff. For VR counselors, Rehabilitation Managers and Program Administrators involved in direct service delivery, this performance evaluation system is designed to improve individual accountability and contributions to achieving federal standards and indicators. For example, specific expectations and evaluation standards are established for the number of rehabilitations achieved and the rehabilitation rate.

Regional accountability measures, reported and reviewed monthly by KRS, address number of rehabilitations and the average wage of persons rehabilitated.

Quarterly key indicator reports address all federal standards and indicators at state and regional levels, facilitating analysis and identification of areas for improvement.

The case review system is intended, in part, to identify effective strategies that contribute to the achievement of standards and indicators, and well as to identify areas for performance improvement.

### **Collaboration with the state workforce investment system**

In several communities, KRS counselors have regularly scheduled itinerant work hours at **KANSASWORKS** workforce development system offices. In Wichita, one counselor is co-located on a full-time basis. KRS Program Administrators are members of Local Workforce Investment Boards, and

these relationships encourage sharing of program information and collaboration. KRS staff also encourage consumers to register with the workforce system for available job opportunities and other services, such as assistance in developing professional resumes. **KANSASWORKS** reports that the workforce development system served 2,900 persons with disabilities during the past year. It is not currently known if any of these individuals were also receiving VR services. A new program being launched in FFY 2013 will increase collaboration and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. **KANSASWORKS** and KRS are working together to implement the Employer Partner Incentive Program which is funded with 100% State General Funds.. Employers may receive incentive payments for hiring and retaining VR clients who are also eligible for KanCare (Medicaid).

### **Overcoming barriers, to the extent they may exist, to equitable access**

Please refer to specific strategies for each goal in Attachment 4.22(c)(1).

Kansas population statistics and VR consumer statistics have been compared in the information below for a snapshot of whether there is equitable access to VR services among persons of diverse racial and ethnic groups. The Kansas population statistics are based on the U.S. Census Bureau 2011 estimate. The VR consumer statistics are based on FFY 2012 data of persons served. The comparison reveals the following information:

Persons who are white comprise 87.4% of the Kansas population, and 77% of persons served in VR.

Persons who are black comprise 6.1% of the state population, and 16% of persons served by VR.

Persons who are American Indian and Alaska Natives comprise 1.2% of the state population, and 2% of persons served by VR.

Persons who identify themselves as multi-racial comprise 2.7% of the state population, and 5% of persons served by VR.

Persons who are Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander comprise 2.6% of the state population, and 1% of the persons served by VR.

Persons of Hispanic or Latino original comprise 10.8% of the state population, and 5% of persons served by VR. (Since Hispanic persons may be of any race, they are also represented in the racial categories above.)

