APPENDIX VI - Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)(Revised)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

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* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council (General)

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets quarterly, and each member is involved in a minimum of one working committee to assist in the facilitation of SRC goals. The current SRC sub-committees include the Executive Committee, the State Plan/Outcomes Committee, the Memberships, Training and Awards Committee and the Legislative and Outreach Committee. SRC members represent all geographical regions of the state, ethnicities, and most importantly, individuals with disabilities. The Council has provided recommendations to the Division on an ongoing basis and as part of its annual reporting process.

SRC Recommendations for 2016:

• The SRC continues to recommend that consistency be achieved in the top administrative positions of NMDVR to provide continuity of management and oversight, and to facilitate continuous staff development and effectiveness.

Agency Response: The agency has filled the positions of Administrative Services Unit Deputy Director and Rehabilitation Services Unit Deputy Director. The agency is actively seeking candidates for a Director. NMDVR has prioritized filing vacancies, which includes those in high-level administrative positions.

• The SRC recommends that a designated SRC member be involved as a liaison with the NMDVR committee that works on the MOP that will be updated to ensure compliance with WIOA.

Agency Response: The agency welcomes feedback from the SRC on Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP) updates to ensure compliance with WIOA prior to public hearings on those
updates. The agency also encourages participation by the SRC in promoting public hearings on the MOP.

- The SRC recommend that counselor training or the “Rehab Academy” be re–implemented by NMDVR to ensure that all new VR counselors have a good foundation in the rehabilitation process.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide the “Rehab Academy” and continues to update content to best meet the needs of new VR Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians as well as those staff requiring updates. The Academy curriculum is currently being revised and expanded. NMDVR is open to providing the SRC an update on Academy in the coming calendar year. The Academy will also be discussed in the New Mexico Unified State Plan.

- The SRC strongly recommends that NMDVR follow federal requirements for SRC members to review potential Independent Fair Health (Hearing) Officer candidates prior to implementing a contract for services. The SRC further recommends that any new Fair Hearing Officer receive routine training on VR processes and protocols to ensure understanding of the issues presented during the Fair Hearing process.

Agency Response: NMDVR will ensure that federal requirements for the selections and training of impartial Hearings Officers are followed and SRC review is a part of this process. NMDVR legal department intends to prepare and provide an official training in March of 2016, where several members of different organizations will be invited to participate.

- The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums to include the DVR web site (the SRC Section and perhaps on the under HOT TOPICS), as well as the Governor’s website, websites of local collaborates, and sister state agencies; such as the Commission for the Blind, The Governor’s Commission on Disability, and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. These efforts would be in line with the public notices that must be published in advance of each meeting / public forum per the State’s Open Meetings Act.

Agency Response: The agency is willing to enhance promotion of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums. To the extent the other state agencies are willing, the agency welcomes their assistance in posting notices.

- The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of the SRC with quarterly meetings for both staff and consumers.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes ideas from the SRC on enhancement of notifications to staff and participants. Recent reassignments of IS duties as well as a high priority on filling vacancies, will aid in consistency of website updates and email notifications.

- The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate how best to implement and assure shorter application periods for DVR clients who reapply for services after case closure, especially in cases for whom post–employment status is not feasible.

Agency Response: Application for services is a federally mandated and individualized process. NMDVR is not in a position to develop arbitrary procedures to expedite application for former participants that are not being opened under post–employment status. NMDVR does use existing data to determine eligibility whenever feasible.
• The SRC recommends that NMDVR evaluate its process for documentation requirements around consumer purchases and services. At this time the public has expressed concern that these processes require unnecessarily exhaustive documentation to justify need, especially when such services are obvious, necessary, and may have been provided to the individual client previously.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to evaluate purchase documentation requirements and is committed to streamlining processes whenever feasible given legal and accounting principle requirements. Some processes have been put into place as a direct response to findings by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Previous provision of a service to a participant is not a guarantee that the same service will be provided again. Provision of services must consistently be based on their necessity toward employment outcome.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate best practices regarding vendor billing procedures, and that a policy be considered to enhance the communication between the Division and the vendor when there appears to be a problem in order to avoid prolonged timelines of authorization for consumer service delivery.

Agency Response: Fiscal processes involve the state procurement system as a whole. That being said, NMDVR has initiated an extensive project toward improvement of billing procedures and processes. There are currently seven Field Operations Specialists (FOS) whose primary function is to increase accuracy and efficiency in financial transactions related to participant services. The agency intends to increase the number of FOS. These specialists have already increased the agency’s capacity to improve communication time and effectiveness with vendors. It is expected that communication and processes with vendors will continue to be enhanced as these specialists become more experienced and additional FOS are hired.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR look into best practices to clarify agency assistance in establishing and maintaining consumers who are pursuing Self–Employment Plans due to the increasing number of requests in this arena. One recommendation on this would be to have a small primer that can be given to DVR clients along with guidelines in setting up Self–Employment Plans while incorporating a sound business plan.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to review operating procedures related to self-employment plans. Participants developing business plans are routinely referred to the Small Business Administration and Contract business development experts (at agency expense) for assistance in completing a business plan. NMDVR also routinely directs participants to current Manual of Operating Procedure guidance on business plan process. The agency is open to exploring further written guidance that can be available to participants in the future.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR implement a tracking a resolution process that increases the efficacy of addressing common complaints and/ or case reviews specific to an Area Office. The same would hold true with a rise of complaints and / or case reviews in a specific Area Office.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes the suggestion for a more standardized tracking system and will consider this option.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR increase partnerships statewide and in the local venues with service providers of youth transition, to look for opportunities to work together in order to enhance the ability to meet transition requirements under WIOA.
Agency Response: NMDVR has already implemented a strategy toward increased statewide partnerships including the development of Intergovernmental Agreements and contracts toward accomplishing Pre-Employment Transition Services requirements under WIOA.

2. the Designated State unit’s response to the Council’s input and recommendations; and (General)

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets quarterly, and each member is involved in a minimum of one working committee to assist in the facilitation of SRC goals. The current SRC subcommittees include the Executive Committee, the State Plan/Outcomes Committee, the Memberships, Training and Awards Committee and the Legislative and Outreach Committee. SRC members represent all geographical regions of the state, ethnicities, and most importantly, individuals with disabilities. The Council has provided recommendations to the Division on an ongoing basis and as part of its annual reporting process.

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Agency Response: NMDVR will ensure that federal requirements for the selections and training of impartial Hearings Officers are followed and SRC review is a part of this process. NMDVR legal
department intends to prepare and provide an official training in March of 2016, where several members of different organizations will be invited to participate.

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Agency Response: NMDVR has already implemented a strategy toward increased statewide partnerships including the development of Intergovernmental Agreements and contracts toward accomplishing Pre–Employment Transition Services requirements under WIOA.

3. the designated State unit’s explanations for rejecting any of the Council’s input or recommendations. (General)

None rejected.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness (General)

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request; (General)

Waiver not requested.
2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and (General)

Waiver not requested.

3. All State plan requirements will apply (General)

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Waiver not requested.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System. (General)

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs; (General)

The Division has developed and maintained interagency agreements with agencies that carry out activities and which do not carry out activities under the statewide workforce investment system. Some of the agencies not under the state workforce investment system are: The Veteran’s Affairs Administration, The New Mexico Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; The Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, The Department of Health, and the Developmental Disabilities Support Services Division, to provide supported employment services to individuals on the developmental disabilities waiver and Jackson Class members. The Department also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Education Department to further effect school–to–work transition services throughout the state including Roswell Job Corp. Further contracts are in place with the Centers of Independent Living; in the state, services include job seeking skills training, job placement and Self–Advocacy and supportive services.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; (General)

Technology has become one of the primary engines for economic activity, education, and innovation in the Nation, and throughout the world. The commitment of the United States to the development and utilization of technology is one of the main factors underlying the strength and vibrancy of the economy of the United States.

The Division works with Governor’s Commission on Disabilities and New Mexico Tap (NMTAP), North East Regional Education Cooperative (REC 4), New Mexico Highlands (NMHU), New Mexico Division Rehab Area 9 work collaboratively in providing Strategies for Technology Assistance in Rural Settings (STARS). NMTAP is also the designated agency for the AT Act and provides AT support throughout the State of NM.
NEREC began a brand new project as of the 2013–14 school year focused on providing AT (Assistive Technology) support to students and adults in this northeastern portion of NM. We have entitled this project S.T.A.R.S.: Strategies for Technology Assistance in Rural Settings.

There is a significant need in rural Northeastern New Mexico for a range of assistive technology (AT) equipment, services, and supports. Most schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies in this quadrant of the state are in areas not readily accessible to these resources, and people with disabilities often do without accommodations that would greatly enhance their opportunities to succeed academically, in training and in careers. The STARS model provides significantly increased access to assistive technology, a critical component of a system of supports.

In general terms, New Mexico is slipping in national rankings of post-secondary education success. We are now 48th in the nation (down from 43rd in 1990) in academic degree completion for students age 25 to 34. Only 12% of New Mexicans who enroll in college have attained an associate or bachelor’s degree after four years in college, compared to 31% nationally. New Mexico ranks 42nd among states related to rates of first–time freshmen returning to college after one year. (New Mexico Secretary of Higher Education, Jose Garcia in address to Luna Community College Board, July 31,2013).

This project will facilitate access to AT for students and adults with disabilities in rural Northeastern New Mexico and assist them in transitioning to higher levels of educational achievement and employment. Easy regional access to NMTAP–ABLE (NM Technical Assistance Program–Assistive Bank of Loan Equipment) equipment will facilitate dissemination of information about available assistive devices, and we will demonstrate systems and assistive technology at a dedicated site on the New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) campus. We will train and support students and adults with disabilities, teachers, ancillary professionals, parents, and families in use of AT in rural Northeastern New Mexico communities with high minority populations, high unemployment, and low measures of academic and employment success. The targeted service area includes San Miguel, Mora, Guadalupe, Colfax, Union, and Harding Counties.

With the assistance of the GCD (Governor’s Commission on Disability) and NMTAP, we will establish a model regional ABLE loan bank with regional demonstrations and trainings at NEREC/NMHU. We will have equipment on loan to students in secondary schools as well as to clients active through the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). NEREC will maintain inventory control and tracking of equipment on loan.

For this initiative, the NEREC and the participating school districts will identify an Assistive Technology Liaison at each school. These individuals will have an adequate foundation in technology and experience working with students with disabilities. These AT liaisons will receive training in applied AT in educational settings, and will meet with teachers, ancillary service providers including SLPs, OTs, and special education directors to identify students with AT needs and assist in setting up evaluations. When students are identified and evaluated, the AT evaluators will train AT liaisons in supporting teachers and ancillary staff who work with students to master the selected technology and provide ongoing support in its use.

An important component of the proposed project will be training and support to parents and families in assisting use of AT in the home and community environment. School social workers will serve as a link to parents and families and will connect them to training through NEREC.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the NMTAP–ABLE Program toward the implementation and sustainability of Assistive Technology programs across the state.
3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; (General)

The Division will seek out guidance from its Federal Cognizant Agency in FFY 2017 toward a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, entering into an appropriate Memorandum of Agreement. Currently, the Division does not participate in programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States, however it has worked cooperatively, in conjunction with other state and non-profit organizations, which includes USDA Forest Service at the local level since FFY 2011 to actively promote and refer participants for Schedule A application. This has led to the employment of multiple NMDVR participants with the US Forest Service.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and (General)

At this time, the Division does not have formal agreements with other federal programs. NMDVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding “Partners for Employment”. This innovative state-wide contract brings together a variety of both in–state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non–traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support NMDVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 NMDVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), and Best Buddies (Long term provider) where ten (10) students and (2) adults began cohort 1 Project Search program at UNM Hospital. Results from cohort one (1): nine (9) interns completed the program with 75% employment placement success within the community, (5 interns were placed at UNM Hospital, 2 placed at Embassy Suites, 1 placed at University of New Mexico). Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. The Division is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Project Search programs across the state. DVR collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work. NM DVR employs a Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each Project Search site. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address Social Security Disability/ Social Security Income concerns and to address benefits income and impact to employment. The Division has established a replica of Project Search in New Mexico. Currently UNM Hospital and Hilton Garden Inn Gallup are providing training and internship rotations for 19 students. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is to assure that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. Collaboration with several state partners, including the NM
Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, Gallup McKinley schools, UNM/CDD, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), UNM Hospital, Hilton Garden Inn Gallup, and Best Buddies (Albuquerque Long term provider) and Empowerment (Gallup Long term provider) have been established.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

Youth Development Inc. (YDI) and the Office of the State of New Mexico, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), are establishing a collaborative partnership to facilitate the transition of youth (ages 14 to 22) from YDI Educational programs to the achievement of their desired post–school outcomes, with a focus on employment; post–secondary education; training and lifelong learning; community participation; and healthy lifestyles; as well as facilitating provision of transition services to all participants who attend YDI programs. YDI and DVR enter into this formal collaboration for the provision of services that allows youth to obtain training through the provision of Career Planning: (the provision of a client–centered approach in the delivery of service, designed to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement). Career Pathway: (a combination of rigorous and high–quality education, training, and other services that includes counseling to support individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals).

In FFY 2014, collaboration with New Mexico School for the Deaf through statewide outreach and Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing has led to improved outreach and coordination with multiple state school districts toward referral of deaf/hard of hearing transition students to NMDVR. Coordination of School–to–Work transition services that include having a team of specialists to collaborate with school transition specialists to conduct outreach, inform, instruct, and coordinate transition services for individuals covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, creating access to transition services for students 14 years of age and utilizing staff (transition coordinator, VR counselors specializing in transition, and VR counselors serving transition students) to collaborate with agencies that provide transition services to develop comprehensive transition plans. Coordination and training events have also begun at agency field staff meetings. While these efforts target a specific population, they have the added benefit of strengthening communications between transition specialists at NMSD as well as state wide school districts and NMDVR field staff. This can benefit all transitioning youth.

5. State use contracting programs. (General)

The Division previously reported legislation to affect a State Use contract program. A vendor was identified and the State Use contracting system is fully operational. The agency conforms to the provisions of this legislation and contracts are submitted to the State Use vendor agency for first right of refusal whenever appropriate.
The vendor for the state use contract is Horizons of New Mexico. This non-profit agency works on behalf of the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities to foster contracts for its members outside of the normal bid process as long as services are at fair market price. Horizons of New Mexico maintains a list of approved services available through its members with disabilities and the state refers to this vendor for those services.

d. Coordination with Education Officials (General)

Describe:

1. DSU's plans (General)

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Division is an organizational unit of and works with the Public Education Department to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency. The Division also works with local education agencies to coordinate student referrals to the Division field offices and provide for eligibility determination of the student for vocational rehabilitation services and the development and approval of the Individual Plan for Employment before the student leaves the school setting.

With the implementation of WIOA on July 1, 2015 each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre-employment transition services, (4) attend person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre-employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, and which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre-employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

Services provided by DVR in collaboration with the local educational agency who are eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services include: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-based learning experiences such as internships, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary training, Job readiness skills training to develop social and independent living skills, and self-advocacy skills. Implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

Order of Selection was implemented in February of 2011. Memoranda of Understanding with Local Education Agencies have been revised to address Order of Selection, however all Order of Selection categories are open and there are no waiting lists currently in place. No waiting lists are anticipated to be necessary in FFY 2017. The Individual Plan for Employment must, at a minimum, identify the long–term vocational rehabilitation goal, intermediate vocational rehabilitation objectives, and goals and objectives related to enabling students with disabilities to live independently. These vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives are to be consistent with the student’s individual education plan. The Division makes every effort to develop and implement the transition student’s Individual Plan for Employment prior to leaving high school. The Division’s role and responsibilities are defined by a formal plan developed by the Public Education Department and, as appropriate, memoranda of agreement with local educational agencies responsible for the free appropriate public education of students with disabilities receiving special education services.

The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). The memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Currently Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

The MOU further outlines: A. Assure that all students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA and its implementing regulations receive appropriate services; B. Coordinate services to students with disabilities so as to maximize learner outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate employment as specified in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); C. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency(ies) to ensure students with disabilities are provided with opportunities for services; D. Coordinate services delivery and follow–up/along with the education/rehabilitation services continuum; E. Establish joint trainings to provide staff development and other training activities for Local Educational Agency (LEA) transition specialists and other individuals involved in transition planning. F. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Mexico Public Education Department was executed in 2004 and remains in effect. Review of the MOU indicates that required elements are in place and updates to the current document are planned to be in place in 2017.

The MOU with the Public Education Department as the SEA defines responsibilities of both the SEA and designated state agency (NMDVR) for leadership, consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning and providing transition services (including VR services) to students with disabilities. This includes technical assistance to aid in facilitation of student IEPs, as appropriate. The MOU identifies NM Public Education Department as the lead agency, establishes that no funds will be exchanged between the parties under the MOU, and provides procedures for dispute resolution between the parties under the MOU. The MOU describes processes for reporting by NMDVR to NMPED regarding VR counselor assignments to New Mexico high schools and service information provided to schools, students and families.
The agreements with individual Local Education Agencies identify: 1. Policies, practices, and procedures that can be coordinated between the agencies, including definitions, eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, policies and procedures for making referrals, procedures for outreach students receiving special education services and in need of transition service, practices and procedures also address time-frames for evaluation and follow-up with students; 2. The roles of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; 3. Procedures for providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to assist staff of State and local educational agencies as to the availability, benefits of, and eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services; 4. Available resources, including sources of funds for the development and expansion of services; 5. The financial responsibility of each agency in providing services to students with disabilities who are receiving special education services consistent with State law; 6. Procedures for resolving disputes between the agencies that are parties to the agreement; and 7. All other components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation among agencies, including procedures to facilitate the development of local teams to coordinate the provision of services to students with disabilities, sharing data, and coordinating joint training of staff providing transition services.

The Division works with local education agencies throughout New Mexico to provide school-to-work transition. Rehabilitation counselors are assigned to all public high schools throughout the state. Division counseling staff and rehabilitation technicians are deployed on a regional basis. Area Division program managers and local counseling staff work with local education agencies to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to apply for vocational rehabilitation services. Referrals are made at the local level from local education agencies or schools to the Division’s field offices.

The Mentoring Diverse Abilities program funding has ended, however transition services continue to be provided by both NMDVR and the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to: (General)

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services; (General)

Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un-served populations.

Order of Selection was implemented in February of 2011. Memoranda of Understanding with Local Education Agencies have been revised to address Order of Selection, however all Order of Selection categories are open and there are no waiting lists currently in place. No waiting lists are anticipated to be necessary in FFY 2017.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs; (General)
The Individual Plan for Employment must, at a minimum, identify the long-term vocational rehabilitation goal, intermediate vocational rehabilitation objectives, and goals and objectives related to enabling students with disabilities to live independently. These vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives are to be consistent with the student’s individual education plan. The Division makes every effort to develop and implement the transition student’s Individual Plan for Employment prior to leaving high school. The Division’s role and responsibilities are defined by a formal plan developed by the Public Education Department and, as appropriate, memoranda of agreement with local educational agencies responsible for the free appropriate public education of students with disabilities receiving special education services.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; (General)

The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). The memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Currently, Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

The MOU further outlines: A. Assure that all students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA and its implementing regulations receive appropriate services; B. Coordinate services to students with disabilities so as to maximize learner outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate employment as specified in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); C. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency(ies) to ensure students with disabilities are provided with opportunities for services; D. Coordinate services delivery and follow-up along with the education/rehabilitation services continuum; E. Establish joint trainings to provide staff development and other training activities for Local Educational Agency (LEA) transition specialists and other individuals involved in transition planning. F. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Mexico Public Education Department was executed in 2004 and remains in effect. Review of the MOU indicates that required elements are in place and updates to the current document are planned to be in place in 2017.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. (General)

The MOU with the Public Education Department as the SEA defines responsibilities of both the SEA and designated state agency (NMDVR) for leadership, consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning and providing transition services (including VR services) to students with disabilities. This includes technical assistance to aid in facilitation of student IEPs, as appropriate. The MOU identifies NM Public Education Department as the lead agency, establishes that no funds will be exchanged between the parties under the MOU, and provides procedures for dispute resolution between the parties under the MOU. The MOU describes processes for reporting by NMDVR to NMPED regarding VR counselor assignments to New Mexico high schools and service information provided to schools, students and families.
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The Mentoring Diverse Abilities program funding has ended, however transition services continue to be provided by both NMDVR and the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations (General)

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Division ensures the appropriate use of community rehabilitation programs to the maximum extent feasible. The Division purchases a broad range of services for clients through local community rehabilitation programs.

These services consist of but are not limited to: 1. Medical, neuropsychological; psychiatric, psychological, social, and vocational services; 2. Testing, fitting, or training in the use of prosthetic and orthotic devices; 3. Recreational therapy; 4. Physical and occupational therapy; 5. Speech, language, and hearing therapy inclusive of purchase of hearing aids; 6. Psychiatric, psychological, and social services, including behavior management services; 7. Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs; 8. Rehabilitation technology; 9. Assistive technology; 10. Job development, placement, and retention services; 11. Orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind; 12. Extended employment; 13. Psycho–social rehabilitation services; 14. Supported employment services and extended services; 15. Services to family members when necessary to the vocational rehabilitation of the individual; 16. Personal assistance services; 17. Services similar to the services described above.
Most services purchased from community rehabilitation programs are on an individualized basis addressing the specific barriers to employment as a result of an individual’s disabling condition. Where applicable, community programs must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The Division requires services be purchased in conformance with State laws which regulate professional practices (ex.: psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc.). When appropriate to the individualized needs of a participant of vocational rehabilitation services, community rehabilitation programs are utilized toward an employment outcome. Contractual agreements are frequently utilized with community rehabilitation programs.

A cooperative agreement with a private non–profit service provider may also be established via a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be utilized with community rehabilitation providers as appropriate which does not require an exchange of agency funds but is a legal document describing a bilateral agreement between parties. This document expresses a convergence of will between the parties indicating an intended common line of action, rather than a legal commitment.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) may be utilized as a written document between parties to cooperatively work together on an agreed upon project or to meet an agreed upon objective. The purpose of an MOA is to have a written understanding of the agreement between parties. The MOA can also be a legal document that is binding and holds the parties responsible to their commitment or it may be a partnership agreement that is not legally binding.

Almost all agreements the division has with private nonprofit organizations are contracts. DVR is currently coordinating with Youth Development Inc. New Mexico to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) specific to serving youth with disabilities, however this MOU is not yet in place.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services (General)

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency’s efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Supported employment services provided by the Division consist of case services made available through the Title VI–B funds of the Rehabilitation Act. Title VI–B funds for Federal Fiscal Year 15 equaled $244,500.00.

Title I funds of the Rehabilitation Act (available for general, basic vocational rehabilitation services) are used for supported employment services upon depletion of Title VI–B funds. The Division procures supported employment services on a case–by–case basis from local rehabilitation programs that have committed long–term funding to the individual participants. Area supervisors conduct direct negotiations of fee for service procurement schedules of supported employment services. The local area supervisors, counselors, Statewide Supported Employment Coordinator and administrative staff monitor the scope and quality of supported employment services available to DVR participants. Supported employment service providers are required to submit monthly reports to
the Division including the local area counselor and supervisor. Reports highlight client progress and satisfaction, as well as pertinent demographic data. The review, compilation, and analysis of the monthly cumulative reports obtained from the contract vendor enable the Division to monitor the quality of job coaching. The DVR counselor reviews these reports with the contract provider to ensure that the scope of services comply with supported employment guidelines and are consistent with the vocational needs of the participant.

The quality of supported employment services is measured in terms of integration achieved by the individual at the work–site along with the amount of wages earned. To increase the level of integration, the Division emphasizes the individualized placement model. This information is documented in the participant case files and monitored on a monthly basis. The scope and extent of services provided to clients under the Individualized Plan for Employment for supported employment continues to be the same as those available to individuals under the Title I program. This is in accordance with Division operating procedures. All services are provided on an equitable basis within the constraints of available funding.

DVR has implemented several intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) and/or Memorandum of Agreements (MOUs) in cooperation with other state agencies including the Department of Health (DOH), Developmental Disabilities Support Division (DDSD), Center for Development and Disabilities (CDD), Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), as well as the Department of Aging and Long Term Services. These cooperative agreements aid in facilitating the transition from Title VI–B funding to a long–term funding source for Supported Employment Services. The transition to extended employment occurs when the time spent by the job coach with the DVR participant in a supported employment program decreases to an average of 8 hours (20%) per week or less.

NOTE****DVR is aware that under the proposed provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that 50% of allocated SE funding will be utilized towards services to youth.

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long–term support funding by the state is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

Provision of Supported Employment as it relates to Mental Health Service

The Department of Human Services provides administrative support to and houses the Behavioral Health Collaborative to provide a long–term funding mechanism for Behavioral Health recipients. Behavioral Health Services and funding is allocated through the Collaborative to provide comprehensive and vocational services to individuals with significant disabling mental illness. Both mechanisms mentioned above are used to fund long–term supported employment services and extended services.

Project Search and Partners for Employment

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.
New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Supported Employment programs across the state. Services that are provided at Center for Development and Disability include education, advocacy, and outreach in the field of Supported Employment. Services are available through Partners for Employment to participants and their families, community providers, job developers, job coaches, employers, as well as, educational facilities. DVR also collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work.

NM DVR employs Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each area of the state. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address SSD(I) to address benefits income and impact to employment.

The NM Department of Health is the state agency responsible for administering Developmental Disabilities Waiver funding under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Behavioral Health Services are administered through state-wide Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO).

g. Coordination with Employers (General)

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and (General)

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) is a viable resource in the State of New Mexico for enhancing and building the diversity of the New Mexico’s labor force and can be an integral part of any employer’s search for qualified, skilled career employees. Employers are supported by a professional team that specializes in preparing NMDVR consumers for employment through pre-employment training, college and technical education, and finally matching the best talent with the right jobs.

Personnel

Advancing New Mexico’s economy and business climate by empowering and supporting the workforce system is the mission of the NMDVR. NMDVR created the position of the Business Support Specialist (BSS) in 2014 to begin to shift the agencies priorities of meeting the workforce needs of New Mexico’s businesses. NMDVR is working towards fully embracing the dual customer role of serving the workforce needs of New Mexico’s business community while building the needed talent through our NMDVR job seeker clientele. NMDVR is working towards fully embracing the dual customer role of serving the workforce needs of New Mexico’s business community while building the needed talent through our NMDVR job seeker clientele. The employment specialist, called Business Support Specialist (BSS) was centralized in the state of New Mexico and assigned to work with NM Workforce Central Region, Albuquerque, NM.

In FFY 2015, DVR Business Support Specialist:

- Was involved in distribution of over 350 employer recruitment Job Fair Lead/Hiring Event events held by Central Region Workforce events
- Arranged and notified staff of 10 On–The–Job Training (OJT) experiences for DVR job seekers
- Notified NMDVR in Central Region of employers who were seeking to recruit staff
- Had contact in 2015 with 25 businesses in New Mexico to discuss recruiting
and hiring people with disabilities • Since 2014, more than 10 business have been directly contacted by NMDVR Business Support Specialist to facilitate hiring needs

In order to prepare staff for shift in dual consumer shift BSS has implemented the following trainings for staff:

1. Labor Market Analysis for the purposes of gaining a comprehensive understanding of target occupational environment, analyzing job trends and factors, and to promote strategic placement activities for NMDVR consumers. BSS will continue to work with agency on a methodology to track and monitor Candidate Screening Activities (CSA) for the purposes of marketing vacancy announcements, finding suitable job candidates, provide consumers detailed job information and/or initial job matching. Staff will continue to be provided with Candidate Training Programs (CTP) which better prepares applicable consumers for job expectations, responsibilities, and essential job functions of target occupations.

2. Caseload Statistical Analysis (CSA) to support agency job placement strategies; AWARE Service J utilization. Activities may include analyzing specific caseloads or units to identify job-ready consumers. Development of standards and criteria have been completed and initial phases of implementation by staff have been developed and trained. Caseload Analysis/Tracking. BSS has requested that NMDVR staff begin to utilize AWARE database feature of “Service J” as a utility to track within the caseload those who are job ready.

3. Field–Based Staff Development to increase capacity, knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the external business environment and strategies/best practices for developing effective business relationships. This training is conducted outside of office site, within the community, to gain the unique perspective and understanding of the targeted external business environment. BSS has begun to request staff members come to outreach meetings at local businesses throughout the state.

4. Community Partners Referral Development to facilitate and/or conduct outreach and marketing activities on agency services for the potential development of new or increased referrals. In late 2015 it was discussed and identified that tracking measures between Workforce Partners needs to be implemented. In 2016, BSS will make strides towards a comprehensive referral tool. Innovation and Expansion—Train and Place Models

An important outcome of listening to business needs includes the development of specialized training programs either with other workforce partners or solely developed with NMDVR consumers, helping NMDVR job seekers obtain the needed curriculum instruction, experience and recruitment assistance necessary to meet the talent needs of specific employers.

NMDVR is currently partnered with the Road Runner Food Bank (RRFB) to develop and provide training for individuals with disabilities in a multifaceted setting.

This regional program is set to begin its pilot in Albuquerque–area retail locations in 2016. The development of this program is the first of its' kind for NMDVR with hopes of gaining statewide traction. Building on the success of the Skills to Work model, also called Place and Train. Dependent on it success, BSS will work with businesses throughout New Mexico to implement this model in their workplaces. Two initiatives were included in the New Mexico Blueprint for Prosperity that will allow DVR to expand place and train opportunities for job seekers with disabilities and New Mexico businesses to target job seekers with disabilities, including veterans with service–related disabilities, in their recruitment and hiring.
2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. (General)

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Transitional Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

Collaboration with Statewide Workforce Investment System: NMDVR has had representatives on the Youth Standing Committee, and School to Work Transitional Alliance. Representatives address the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system, both in developing policy and influencing service delivery.

The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. Although the Navigator program is completed, it did serve to increase awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and employment–related needs of people with disabilities at local One–stop stops. The result is that One–stop staff have established and continue to maintain contact with NMDVR counselors throughout the state.

Please see Section c.4. (Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth) for information regarding Project Search. This is an example of coordination with employers to provide required pre-employment transition services to students in addition to services for out-of-school youth. Further coordination with employers continues to be developed through the collaborations described above.

The Operator of the One–stop Provider in the Central and Northern regions of New Mexico sits on the State Rehabilitation Council as a business representative. He has committed to improving greater collaboration and resource sharing in both regions.

h. Interagency Cooperation (General)

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act; (General)

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have
developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and (General)

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) has been entered into between the New Mexico Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division and the Department of Aging and Long Term Services to accomplish joint implementation for supported employment under: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C 795(b)(1) and 721(a)(11); 8.314.5 New Mexico Administrative Code and Walter Stephens Jackson, et.al. vs. Los Lunas Center for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, et.al. CIV No.87–0839–JP/LCS. The purpose of this IGA is intended to implement the following protocol and provision of services. The IGA outlines joint responsibilities of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, as well as targeted outcomes for each agency. The IGA defines ongoing support services.

Services that are: 1. Needed to support and maintain an individual with significant disabilities in supported employment, 2. Based on a determination by the designated State Unit of the individual’s needs as specified in an Individualized Plan for Employment; and 3. Furnished by the designated State Unit in 34 CFR 363.4(c)(3) and following transition, by one or more extended services providers throughout the individual’s term of employment in a particular job placement or multiple placements if those placements are being provided under a program of transition to employment. 4. Include, at a minimum, twice–monthly monitoring to assess employment stability at the work site of each individual in supported employment (unless the Individualized Plan for Employment provides for off–site monitoring), and based upon that assessment, the coordination or provision of specific services at or away from the work site, that are needed to maintain employment stability. If off–site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, there must be contact with the employer each month.

3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services. (General)

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long–term support funding by the State is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

Behavioral Health Services are administered through state–wide Health Maintenance Organizations(HMO).

NMDVR is a member of New Mexico’s Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. During the past four years, work continued toward intra–agency collaboration specifically dealing with behavioral health services among all 17 agencies/divisions of the BHPC. Under the terms of an agreement reached with the State Behavioral Health Services Division, NMDVR continues to facilitate and monitor employment services for people within the BHSD system and to assist others in making connections with that system. Coordination of services among BHSD, NMDVR, regional employment providers, and mental health providers can increase successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development (General)
(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10). Describe the designated State agency's 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, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development (General)

A. Qualified Personnel Needs. (General)

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category; (General)

NMDVR has a Staff Development Unit that works closely with Human Resource unit to determine analysis of personnel needs and resources. In addition, Management staff regularly reviews the field staffing issues to assist in planning for future staffing needs. Staff Development unit is specifically assigned to maintain training databases in order to determine valuable training efforts to prepare staff for their various positions within the agency. Although NMDVR has determined to no longer support the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in its previous form of supporting staff towards educational goals, the intention is to maintain support to all staff in professional development through various alternate methods.

In preparation for its budget request, the Division annually assesses the supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals available to the Division to ensure an adequate staffing base. With the implementation of Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act the agency has closely reviewed staffing needs and planned appropriately to advocate for an increase to the Divisions total workforce in the coming years.

Staff Development Unit is also responsible for providing updated training information to include Licensures, Certifications and various training completions relevant to their positions. Staff participation in training is entered into databases which are routinely reviewed to ensure updated information is accurate. SDU Staff is also responsible for providing any updated licensure or certification information to Staff Development Unit.

The Division maintains professional vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide direct client services. These counselors manage individual caseloads. The total number of counselors employed corresponds with a ratio of approximately one counselor per 31,599 of the general population, the number of positions filled as allowed by the State Personnel Office, and the available budget as approved by the State Legislature and Congress. Under this current methodology the Division has 66 caseloads to serve a statewide population base of 2,085,572. Ideally, the Division would like to decrease this ratio by increasing the number of employed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This particular goal has been on–going and will continue to be supported moving forward in order to establish more workable caseload sizes. The Division has determined that 23 new counselor positions will be necessary to adequately meet the growing population needs, and provide the appropriate support to our Transition students. Therefore, a total of 89 counselor positions employed with in the agency is ideal. In addition, the agency has expansion goals for positons in the following personnel categories 2–Program Managers, 2– Administrative Assistants, 1–Field Operations Specialist Supervisor, 4 – Field Operations specialist, 14–Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation
Counselors, 2 – Transition Coordinators, 2– Business Support specialists. DVR is currently making efforts to fill all key positions in addition to advocating for the additional staff. This goal will remain a priority of the agency as will the effort to reduce the vacancy rate to under 10 percent or less.

When fully staffed, the Division employs 121 direct service positions consisting of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Rehabilitation Technicians, and Caseload Secretaries in the Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU). There are 66 vocational rehabilitation counselor positions for the 66 caseloads located throughout the state. The Division also employs 34 rehabilitation technicians and 21 caseload secretaries providing direct services to DVR clients. The ratio of counselor to rehabilitation technician and caseload secretaries varies throughout the state given the available resources. A typical ratio is one caseload secretary and one rehabilitation technician to two vocational rehabilitation counselors. In some offices in rural locations, DVR staff is usually one counselor and one rehabilitation technician. The Division employs 13 individuals with Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, (CRC) designation. All have Masters Degrees. Seven of these individuals are caseload Rehabilitation Counselors located throughout the State providing direct services to DVR clients. Another 6 certified individuals occupy other professional positions located in the Division as follows:

Administrative Services RSU Field Operations Directors = Two Position RSU Program Managers = Four Positions The Division encourages eligible staff to attain and maintain CRC designation.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and (General)

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In consideration of current staffing the information is completed below:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Total Positions: 66 Current Vacancies: 12 Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 8

Rehabilitation Technicians Total Positions: 34 Current Vacancies: 6 Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years: 9

Caseload Secretary Total Positions: 21 Current Vacancies: 9 Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 7

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors. (General)

The Division maintains professional vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide direct client services. These counselors manage individual caseloads. The total number of counselors employed corresponds with a ratio of approximately one counselor per 31,599 of the general population, the number of positions filled as allowed by the State Personnel Office, and the available budget as approved by the State Legislature and Congress. Under this current methodology the Division has 66 caseloads to serve a statewide population base of 2,085,572. Ideally, the Division would like to decrease this ratio by increasing the number of employed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This particular goal has been on-going and will continue to be supported moving forward in order to establish more workable caseload sizes. The Division has determined that 23 new counselor positions will be necessary to adequately meet the growing population needs, and provide the appropriate support to our Transition students. Therefore, a total of 89 counselor positions employed with in the agency is ideal. In addition, the agency has expansion goals for positions in the following personnel categories 2–Program Managers, 2– Administrative Assistants, 1–Field Operations Specialist Supervisor, 4 – Field Operations specialist, 14–Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, 2 – Transition Coordinators, 2– Business Support specialists. DVR is currently making efforts to fill all key positions in addition to advocating for the additional staff. This goal will remain a priority of the agency as will the effort to reduce the vacancy rate to under 10 percent or less.

B. Personnel Development (General)

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:
i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; (General)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation. Currently, NMHU has 39 students currently enrolled in their graduate Counseling Program and 10 of those students are identified in the Rehabilitation track. NMHU has graduated 7 individuals from the Rehabilitation program as of the completion of spring 2015. In 2014, NMHU had 19 total graduates from the Rehabilitation track. NMHU reports that no student in the 2015 class is being supported by RSA dollars.

All graduates of NMHU’s Rehabilitation Counseling Program are eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As of last October, 2014, 28 NMHU students took the CRC examination. Since 2010, 33 graduates from NMHU have become licensed in the state of New Mexico and other states.

Goal/Activity: In further maintaining and developing a strong relationship, NMHU will continue to request DVR presence on their curriculum Advisory Council to ensure that coursework is aligned with Agency goals. DVR will review collaboration efforts in terms of hosting interns from NMHU to complete their internship within NMDVR. No internships were established between NMDVR offices in 2014 or 2015. Individuals from within the agency have taught courses in Foundations of Rehabilitation, Transition, and Job Placement in NMHU’s Rehabilitation Counselor Master’s program.

New Mexico Highlands University remains as an accredited program and their accreditation is valid through 2020, however the school is reviewed annually in order to hold full accreditation.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and (General)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation.

New Mexico Highlands University Students enrolled: 10

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure. (General)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation.

All graduates of NMHU’s Rehabilitation Counseling Program are eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As of last October, 2014, 28 NMHU students took the CRC examination. Since 2010, 33 graduates from NMHU have become licensed in the state of New Mexico and other states.
New Mexico Highlands University Graduates from the previous year: 19

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel (General)

Describe the development and implementation of a 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 personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

NMDVR utilizes various information to plan for projected needs to expand the number of FTE’s as well as realign distribution of work accordingly within the agency to best meet our participant needs. Management staff continually meet to discuss the various staffing issues and determine the agency need in planning for vital positions. Management and Staff Development Unit collects Human Resource data as well as field data to plan for upcoming staffing needs. The information collected provides Management information on upcoming retirements, vacancy rates, educational requirements and new FTE development. The goal for NMDVR is to continually review workforce data to plan for and predict future needs of the agency in order to avoid service delays to participants. Staff Development Unit will work closely with Management as well Higher Education establishments to provide, develop and support potential recruitment possibilities. The implementation of Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act has provided the agency the opportunity to expand the pool of eligible applicants for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions. The previous standard of Master’s Degree has been amended to Bachelor’s degree per WIOA. WIOA has also expanded the definition of related degrees to be considered appropriate to meet the educational standards to work effectively in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation. Over the past year, the agency has been able to staff many vacant caseloads due to this new practice, and has reduced the vacancy rate for Counselor positions to 18%. Although the agency has made many efforts to obtain qualified employees the goal remains to lower the vacancy rate and maintain current staff.

In response, the Division has implemented strategies that have impacted significant reduction in the turnover rate and will provide a valuable incentive to employee retention.

1) Employees of the Division are covered by the State Personnel Act:

2) The Division has committed to hiring and compensating staff at competitive salaries (appropriate placement); The Division is also making strides to offer opportunity for internal advancement based on educational accomplishments. The agency intends to review current VRC pay bands to provide variances based on educational and certification qualifications.

3) State of New Mexico employees are offered a competitive employment benefits package, including premium health care coverage and having the option to retire with 25 years of services (75% of average of top three years’ salary) for staff hired before 2012 and 30 years of service thereafter;

4) State Personnel Board Rules allow for VR Counselors to be paid a supervisory differential for assuming supervisory responsibilities inclusive of training staff in effective case management and best practices;

5) The Division offers training and continuing education opportunities not available with other state Agencies.
The Division experiences some barriers in hiring qualified staff particularly in isolated work locations. The State Personnel Director, pursuant to the direction of the State Personnel Board, establishes, maintains and in conjunction with state agencies, administers a pay plan for all positions throughout the classified service. The State Personnel Director conducts an annual survey of Total Compensation (means of all forms of cash compensation and the dollar value of the employer-sponsored benefit package.)

The comparison market is comprised of private and public entities within the state of New Mexico, regional state government employers, and Central, Western, and Southwestern state government employers. The pay plan offers many compensation tools for agencies to utilize to help management attract qualified applicants as well as retain employees who contribute to the overall success of the organization, motivate employees to maintain high standards of productivity and service, and reward employees for their specific contributions to the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives.

The Division has committed funds for retraining efforts to ensure that all personnel, particularly vocational rehabilitation counselors, meet the highest requirements in the state applicable to that particular profession. In providing for training programs, the Division takes into consideration succession planning and capacity building as well as evolving issues such as amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, WIOA, the Workforce Investment Act, Ticket-to-Work, consumer informed choice, etc.

The Division has been largely successful in recruiting individuals with disabilities as well as those from minority groups. The Division continues to hire individuals with disabilities whenever those individuals are viable candidates. Job accommodations for staff with disabilities are routinely provided to maintain employment. The Division advertises job openings on the Internet at DVRgetsjobs.com, in addition to State Personnel Office listings; both are available nationally to anyone with Internet access. The Division uses the State Personnel automated data system to account for the number of employees, status of individual employees as probationary, permanent, temporary, or term and related information such as salary, earned leave balance, etc. Vacancies are reported on a routine basis and used to monitor hiring activities. All new hires, promotions and transfers require the approval of the Division Director.

In addition, the Division will continue to provide training to all staff interested in increasing their job skills. The goal of Staff Development Unit is to respond to agency initiatives in order to provide valuable internal training supports to enhance knowledge, skills and abilities to the various agency positions. SDU will continue to collaborate with internal staff identified as experienced in their respective positions to support the training of new employees in their various areas. SDU will make efforts to collaborate with Management to identify options for implementation of a mentorship modality to be adopted by the agency in order to provide an expansion of quality training and hands-on support for new staff.

The Division’s strategic planning effort includes a Goal Area of Career Development and Succession Planning for all staff. The Division is well aware of the need to hire and retain well qualified staff.

NMDVR is proactively working toward the future in terms of career development and succession planning. With the expanded application pool based on WIOA educational standards for VRC positions there is an obvious increased need for training to new staff in specific VR topics. SDU advisory committee will be reestablished to address the many challenges and changes in our ability to support various educational endeavors that our staff may seek.
It is hoped that the above listed measures will encourage well-qualified staff to elect remaining employed with the Division beyond retirement eligibility during anticipated upcoming shortages of qualified workers.

3. Personnel Standards (General)

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and (General)

The Division developed state licensure for vocational rehabilitation counselors through its parent agency, the New Mexico Public Education Department in 2001. This licensure, endorsed in rule by the Public Education Department is required of all vocational rehabilitation counselors working for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is commensurate with national standards under CSPD.

In January 2002, a policy requiring all VR counselors to apply for state licensure by December 2002 was adopted. Counselors who are not eligible for the highest level of state licensure are required to be tracked through direct work experience for the established time frame in order to obtain licensure.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. (General)

In 2015, DVR amended the academic standard for the Job Related Qualifications Standard to meet the new WIOA standard. The New Mexico Public Education Department licensure appropriate to VRC positions within the NMDVR is Primary and Secondary Education School Personnel—Licensure Requirements for Ancillary and Support Personnel Licensure in Rehabilitation Counseling Pre K–12. The NMDVR is working with PED to utilize 5 pathway options to support our VRC’s towards state licensure as follows:

Pathway 1 Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (earned from a regionally accredited college/university)

Pathway 2 Master’s Degree in school counseling, vocational counseling or other related field (earned from a regionally accredited college/university); and Verification of 1 year of experience in Rehabilitation Counseling Or: 15 semester hours of credit in rehabilitation counseling in the areas of vocational/transition assessment, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial and/or psycho–cultural aspects of disability, case management in rehabilitation counseling, issues and practices in rehabilitation counseling, or placement aspects of rehabilitation counseling

Pathway 3 Bachelor’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (earned from a regionally accredited college/university); and Verification of 1 year of direct vocational rehabilitation job experience

Pathway 4 Bachelor’s Degree in school counseling, vocational counseling or other related field
(earned from a regionally accredited college/university); and Verification of 2 years of direct vocational rehabilitation job experience. Or: 5 semester hours of credit in rehabilitation counseling in the areas of vocational/transition assessment, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial and/or psycho-cultural aspects of disability, case management in rehabilitation counseling, issues and practices in rehabilitation counseling, or placement aspects of rehabilitation counseling.

Pathway 5: Possess a certificate issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

Currently, all DVR counselors have applied for licensure and/or background check. It should be noted that new counselors have 90 days from their start date to apply for their license. Licensure application includes a criminal background check. All applications are monitored for compliance. If new DVR counselors do not meet the experience requirement for State Licensure, they are directed to proceed with the background check, and apply for licensure upon gaining the necessary experience. Initial VR counselor licenses must be renewed after three years.

State licensure is identified in policy as top priority and required for continued employment. Identified documents to be submitted in the credentials package for licensure include: 1. Official college transcripts of all degrees received; 2. Copy of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification, if applicable; 3. Work history in a rehabilitation field; 4. Copies of course syllabi from courses related to counseling and guidance; vocational counseling; disability; psycho-social or psycho-cultural aspects of disability; case management in rehabilitation counseling; and placement aspects in rehabilitation counseling. 5. Criminal background information. 6. Fingerprints.

4. Staff Development. (General)

Describe the State agency’s policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development (General)

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Division continues to work cooperatively with the Public Education Department to issue State Licensure for rehabilitation counselors. The Division is coordinating with the State Personnel Office to incorporate the qualifications that are required for licensure into the requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselors within the State’s compensation and classification system and develop pay equity to better reflect the qualifications of licensed counselors.

Counselors are encouraged to submit credentials and meet the qualification requirements of the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor designation as this is the highest recognized level of a qualified counselor under the licensure rule.

CRC credits are made available to the agency each year through an application process with Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As trainings are made available to our staff internally the application is submitted for approval to CRCC in order to determine if CEU’s on the VR topics presented to staff are within the established guidelines. Should the training meet the standard then CRCC allows the agency to provide CEU’s to CRC staff.
In terms of participation in external trainings, staff participate in various trainings that do offer CEU opportunities. Promotion of CEU’s in order to maintain Certification standards is encouraged for staff. NM DVR has an established approval process to support training(s) by allowing employees to enter training requests. Training requests are entered into our Training Administration System where the employee provides details on training objectives, and availability of CEU’s offered by the Training Provider. The process begins with the employee entering a request for training, direct manager reviewing and approving the request, Unit Head reviewing and approving the request and finally our Staff Development Unit to approve and generate purchase orders to cover the registration costs for participation in the training. NM DVR encourages all staff to continually seek training opportunities for career development, and furthermore supports CEU's for CRC staff.

All new hires for VRC positions are reviewed by SDU to provide the best direction towards meeting licensure requirements.

The Division maintains a Staff Development Unit (SDU) that is designated to provide for professional and paraprofessional development of all staff from various training facilities. All employees are encouraged to continually update their job skills and knowledge by taking advantage of training available to them through the SDU. Training can be internal to the agency, state sponsored training and training external of the agency through institutions of higher education, private vendors, professional training organizations – any training that a staff member would appreciate taking to enhance job performance with particular emphasis on assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology. The goal of SDU is to provide continual educational and training opportunities that are meaningful to staff to return to their respective positions in their various areas and provide quality services.

SDU provides and monitors a series of required training that is available to all new employees. NMDVR policy provides that all employees repeat several of these courses on a regular basis. These on–demand, computer–based courses include: Fraud Awareness, Federal Grants Management, Sexual Harassment Prevention, Civil Rights, Workplace Bullying–Violence Prevention, Mileage and Per Diem, Email Essentials and Substance Abuse & the Drug– Free Workplace Act. Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians also complete on–line courses of VR 101: Determining Eligibility and Writing the Individualized Plan for Employment. A Preventing Retaliation Claims Webinar is required for Managers and Supervisors as is a yearly refresher on Employment Related Conflict Resolution. State Personnel Office also does require Supervisors to partake in State sponsored management training.

Staff Development Unit is also charged with coordination of New Employee Orientation (NEO). This day–long event is held quarterly at the State Office and features presentations from agency leaders. The emphasis is on agency culture and “Succeeding at the NMDVR”. NEO is one part of a comprehensive onboarding program currently being developed to increase employee engagement and retention by helping new staff feel welcome and appreciated.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge (General)

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

SDU also offers Rehabilitation Academy to new counselors and rehabilitation technicians (rehabilitation secretaries are highly encouraged to attend). Participants from the Native American partner agencies and community based programs are invited to attend Rehab Academy when space is available.
The Academy is taught over a two week period in a spaced learning manner and focuses on comprehensive assessment, eligibility, IPE development, case management vocational counseling, job placement, Ticket-to-work, supportive employment and transition. Sample cases are discussed and developed throughout the training. The academy is designed to follow VR process so new staff learn to make appropriate eligibility decisions as well as decisions about suitable vocational goals. Participants give the Academy high marks in terms of content and satisfaction with content delivery. SDU makes good use of technology in offering the training.

SDU will implement an Academy training for new Support Staff in terms of Rehabilitation Technicians and Vocational Secretaries in relation to their job duties and fiscal processes adapted by the agency. All new staff as well as established support staff are encouraged to attend this new addition to the training options of the agency. The training will emphasize the support duties respective to caseloads, participants and vendors.

The Division uses a customized software application called the Training Administration System (TAS) to track employee training progress. This software provides the information necessary to summarize the training requested and completed on an individual basis. It provides the data necessary to analyze overall progress of individuals and groups of employees toward obtaining and retaining required credentials. The system offers the agency the ability to track all employees' training and enables employees to request training offered by other vendors.

The SDU routinely acquires and disseminates research and information via electronic mail and Agency Intranet. Enhancements have been made to the SDU webpage which now includes training announcements, Rehab Academy materials, and an archive of recorded webinars. The SDU intranet page will also be updated with new upcoming training opportunities based on professional development topics. The addition to this feature will support both management and staff to identify valuable training within related VR topics.

Although SDU has been understaffed over the past year, the intention is for SDU to continue to collaborate with partners from TACE and UA Currents to develop new training, conduct training needs assessment and then utilize this information to support more training development for the agency. UA Currents offers workshops and seminars in various topics related to Rehabilitation Counseling all geared to sharpen counselors' skills and abilities in serving citizens of New Mexico who have disabilities. The training topics are always based on expressed needs, whether by management or by committees such as the agency's Health and Safety Committee. SDU has recently been working with UA Currents to develop a series of trainings to implement into the Agency sponsored Rehabilitation Academy.

In moving forward with the expansion of training opportunities SDU will continue to coordinate with leaders from other units and representation by various positions within the agency to collaborate and identify valuable trainings that maintain the integrity of the training provided to all staff.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs (General)

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

In New Mexico, there are large portions of the general population whose first language is Spanish or an American Indian dialect. When necessary, the Division obtains the services of interpreters of Spanish and other languages. However, Division staffing, which is consistent with the percentage of minority population and the general population, includes many individuals who are able to
communicate in Spanish and native languages. This is most beneficial in terms of providing services to applicants and eligible individuals with limited English speaking ability.

Although not a requirement, the Division may give preference to individuals who are bilingual or multilingual in applying for Division jobs. Many of the Division’s field offices have at least one individual who can speak Spanish or an American Indian dialect. The Division’s EEO Plan reflects the State’s diversity. The Division successfully recruits graduates of New Mexico Highlands University’s Vocational Rehabilitation master’s program. Many of these graduates are from various minority groups.

In addition, the Division employs several individuals skilled in communicating in American Sign Language. When necessary, interpreters are hired to fulfill communication needs. Video Relay Interpreter equipment has also been installed in more rural field offices where use of live interpreters is quite limited. Staff in those offices have completed training in use of the equipment.

Telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices may be used to assist individual applicants and clients to participate in and benefit from the rehabilitation program. The Division may purchase, lease, or utilize equipment from loan banks to meet these needs, as appropriate. Division staff may consult experts in rehabilitation technology and assistive devices to address client needs. Vocational evaluations and rehabilitation engineering services are purchased through qualified vendors. Other services purchased through qualified vendors include accessibility studies, job modifications, and identifying essential functions of jobs for employers and employees. The Division also employs some staff capable of performing these services.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (General)

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit’s comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division is organizationally placed under the Public Education Department, as is the Special Education Unit, which administers state services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Division has and will continue to coordinate with the Special Education Unit and will coordinate its professional development activities with those provided under IDEA. This activity will be implemented under the auspices of the Secretary of Education. The licensure rules for Rehabilitation Counselors in New Mexico are in agreement with the Public Education Department requirements and competencies applicable to both the school systems to effect school–to–work transition in the high schools and the Division. The Statewide Transition Coordinator provides routine Transition training to all field staff with emphasize on the staff directly providing transition services. IDEA, IEP’s, Diagnostic Data are all represented through Transition Services. The Transition Coordinator also provides up–to–date information to staff regarding IDEA and acts as the liaison between DVR and Public Education Department. The agency will continue to encourage Transition Coordinator to maintain a board seat on IDEA, School–to–work Transition Alliance and maintain relations to support Regional Education Cooperative Memberships, and NM Youth Committee. It is the intention of the agency to continue cooperation and coordination with the personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

j. Statewide Assessment (General)

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).
1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those: (General)

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services; (General)

The Division jointly conducts with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) continuing statewide studies to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities within the State and the best methods to meet those needs. The Division periodically conducts surveys through its programs, projects and activities to ensure that the annual evaluation of effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program meets the goals and objectives set forth in the State Plan, and does not impede the accomplishments of the purpose and policy of federal funding.

As part of the development of the State Plan, the continuing statewide studies include:

1) A triennial comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities who reside in the State, 2) A triennial review of the effectiveness of outreach procedures used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who are unserved and under-served by the vocational rehabilitation system; and 3) A triennial review of the broad variety of methods to provide, expand, and improve vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals receiving supported employment services.

The Division has historically conducted a statewide needs assessment and consumer satisfaction survey of the effectiveness of the State’s Vocational Rehabilitation program in providing vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services, especially to individuals with the most significant disabilities. In recent years, this has been interrupted due to budgetary constraints. The Division, in cooperation with the SRC, had an evaluation completed in July of 2015. The evaluation analyzes the extent to which the Division has achieved the goals and priorities established in the State Plan and annual amendments to the plan; and that the Division is in compliance with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The State Rehabilitation Commission (SRC) also conducted a consumer satisfaction survey to assist in gaining consumer feedback and assessing consumer perceptions of the program. The SRC contracted with Davis Innovations, Inc. (DI) to perform the 2015 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of randomly selected participants with an “active program status.” The results of the assessment (completed in July of 2015) identified Vocational Rehabilitation needs of respondents.

Overall, the NMDVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey findings demonstrate that the NMDVR staff is providing program participants with an extremely satisfying level of service. The high number of consumers that reported being satisfied with the NMDVR services supports this finding. The results show that 86.2% of the respondents reported being either extremely satisfied or satisfied. Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 63.0% of the respondents stated being satisfied with NMDVR’s services, this represents a 23.2% increase in overall consumer satisfaction since 2012.

Similarly, almost 100% of the respondents reported being treated with courtesy and respect by their counselors (97.7% said “Yes”). Likewise, when asked if the other NMDVR staff treated them with courtesy and respect, 96.6% said “Yes.” Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 83.2% stating NMDVR staff were courteous, this represents an increase of 14.5% in
staff courteousness. The NMDVR counselors also received high customer satisfaction ratings for their responsiveness. Respondents stated being very satisfied or satisfied with their counselor’s response to emails and phone calls (86.9%). Likewise, when asked if their counselor was responsive to their requests for service, 95.2% stated "Yes." The majority of respondents also reported they feel NMDVR understands their disability (86.0% stated "Yes}).

Of the respondents’ reported barriers to employment, education and training was reported to be the biggest challenge with 58.7% of the consumers citing this as a barrier. The respondents’ desire for education and training is further exemplified by the areas with which they identified needing assistance (job development 43.1%; education 41.7%; training 43.1%). Medical services were cited as the second most common barrier to employment at 33.3%, with transportation and mental health services being cited equally as the third and fourth most common barrier (27.0%). Ultimately, the goal of DVR is the employment of individuals with disabilities. In general, the employment rates of people with disabilities in the United States after receiving vocational rehabilitation services are consistently found to be around 60% (Source: A. Dutta, R. Gervey, F. Chan, C. Chou, and N. Ditchman, “Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities: A United States Study,” J Occup Rehabil. 18, 2008, pgs. 326–34.). The fact that NMDVR clients exhibited a 53.6% employment rate shows that services provided to clients by NMDVR staff are approaching national average performance.

Recommendations Based on the tabulated results of the survey and the suggestions provided by the respondents, Davis Innovations offers NMDVR the following recommendations:

Update NMDVR Program Participant Contact List – To maximize the number of survey responses and thus generate greater statistical significance, DI recommends the NMDVR update their program participant contact list. Out of 500 consumer names and addresses DI received from NMDVR, nine (9) were duplicates; and 139 were returned by the Post Office with "undeliverable names/addresses." Also, a 70% survey response is an extremely optimistic response rate. Based on this survey response rate of 25%, DI recommends a survey mailing of 1400 to known individuals at known addresses to achieve a survey with 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error for the current set of 5,871 open NMDVR cases.

Provide Staff and Counselors with Training and Support – Overall, respondents’ reported NMDVR counselors and staff as being responsive, courteous, and helpful. However, similar to the 2012 survey results, respondent responses to the open-ended questions revealed that participant interactions with NMDVR staff are complicated. In order to fully respond to the cited barriers to employment identified in the Summary of Results section of this report, DI recommends ongoing training for counselors. In addition, in the instances of counselor turnover, DI recommends the staff that interacts with consumers receive cross training to better assist consumers who are between assigned counselors.

Enhance Participants’ Access to Training, Education, and Job Support Services – To meet the NMDVR consumer’s need for job training and education, DI recommends enhancing training programs to provide greater access to these needed services. Furthermore, engaging in “best practices research” such as documented in the research literature can provide NMDVR policy makers with methods to improve service provision.

New Mexico DVR has implemented two additional programs that are intended to expand and increase Supported Employment services throughout the state. These services are targeted to youth and individuals who have been identified as most severely disabled through innovative programs under the umbrella of Partners for Employment. The first program, Project Search was implemented in 2012–2013 to provide opportunities in collaboration with statewide school districts, and business
partners in conjunction with DOH, toward access to employment opportunities that are unique and innovative in serving individuals with significant disabilities. Partners for Employment is identified as the statewide entity to oversee and manage a variety of Supported Employment Programs. This program is intended to serve and support individuals with a variety of disabling conditions.

The Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work program is designed to provide a network of providers for Social Security beneficiaries to obtain employment outcome services. NMDVR is no longer an Employment Network, however the division continues to provide services and information to participants related to Social Security Benefits. This includes five field staff located throughout the state that specialize in benefits advisement. NMDVR and Behavioral Health Services: NMDVR is a member of New Mexico’s Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. During the past four years, work continued toward intra–agency collaboration specifically dealing with behavioral health services among all 17 agencies/divisions of the BHPC. Under the terms of an agreement reached with the State Behavioral Health Services Division, NMDVR continues to facilitate and monitor employment services for people within the BHSD system and to assist others in making connections with that system. Coordination of services among BHSD, NMDVR, regional employment providers, and mental health providers can increase successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

Collaboration with agencies providing services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals: Beginning in FFY 2013, NMDVR has participated in a collaborative effort with NM School for the Deaf, NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, NM Workforce Connection, Community Outreach Program for the Deaf and NM Public Education Department. Representatives from these agencies meet on a regular basis to explore and implement improvements in service provision to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. This collaboration continues to increase resource information sharing between representatives of the above agencies, Ticket–to–Work overview information for coalition representatives, increased awareness of specific needs and issues of Transition students who are deaf/hard of hearing, and improved collaboration regarding referral of deaf and hard of hearing Transition students to vocational rehabilitation services statewide. In FFY 2014, information and awareness presentations have begun with both NMDVR field offices and school districts. This effort will continue state–wide. Some members of this coalition attended the Pepnet Summit in January 2014. Efforts are underway to propose a Memorandum of Understanding between member groups toward increased sharing of service outcome data.

B. who are minorities; (General)

NMDVR recognizes the need to address the vocational rehabilitation needs of minorities. One such measure is to work toward the improvement of community rehabilitation programs within the state to address rehabilitation needs of minorities, especially those in remote rural communities.

Central western New Mexico is a very large territory inclusive of Indian Reservation land. American Indian populations have access to four community rehabilitation providers through their local tribal affiliations when resident on Indian land. However, for non–American Indian populations access to community rehabilitation programs is limited to one provider and again funding is an issue relative to
acquiring supported employment services. There are four staff in the Gallup DVR office serving a
geographic community of almost 80 miles to the east, 25 miles to the Arizona state line, not less
than 80 miles to the south, and not less than 50 miles to the north. Outside of Gallup the services
available to American Indian populations become even more limited, there is not much available in
terms of community rehabilitation programs in central western New Mexico.

The Division continues to explore ways to improve services to American Indian populations as well
as increasing staff competencies with respect to cultural differences. Division resources will
determine priority and further development of these broad general goals of Career Development,
Successful Employment Outcomes, and DVR–SRC Collaboration:

1. Career Development: Develop, create, increase, and improve specific training at Rehabilitation
Academy specific to / incorporating Native American issues such as: a. cultural competency issues,
b. identifying / listing statewide community services providers specific to Native Americans and
making this information available to all counseling staff / teams c. best practices in developing
professional relationships with the 121 Programs in the state (who’s who, where located, 121
Program Strengths, and their employment outreach activities) d. the array of services 121 programs
offers (what they actually offer / provide and not what is specified by law, to learn how best to
dovetail DVR services / strengths with 121 Program services / strengths e. dual participation of
Native Americans in both 121 Programs and State VR, citing the laws / rules that govern this f. have
121 Program Directors participate and/or do the topic presentations / training at Rehabilitation
Academy g. identifying best practices already employed by DVR counseling staff / teams that could
be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy.

Successful Employment Outcomes: h. Target increased successful employment outcomes of Native
American participants as a strategic goal of the Division. This will help give focus and direction to
achieving such a goal. i. Explore self–employment opportunities with Native American DVR
participants who have expressed desire to remain in their community with their business and / or
those who want to locate their business in both their community and in the larger community j.
Develop working collaborative partnerships with statewide community services providers with
outreach and /or specific services to Native American populations, such as Zia Chapter Paralyzed
Veterans of America, Inc.; Abrazos Family Support Services: Education for Parents of Indian
Children with Special Needs; Native American Disability Las Center, Inc.; and of course, the Centers
for Independent Living throughout the state. k. Many DVR counselors and staff who have expertise
and / or have established networks with services to

Native American populations: Gallup, Farmington, Rio Rancho, Taos, and other DVR venues. Their
expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all
DVR counseling staff / teams.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program; (General)

There are rural locations throughout the state where population is scarce and distances vast from
community to community with few rehabilitation community providers. These rural locations are
itinerantly served by DVR offices in larger communities with many community rehabilitation services
providers stretching their resources as best they can to extend services.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce
development system; and (General)
Collaboration with Statewide Workforce Investment System: NMDVR has had representatives in the State and all of the local Workforce Investment boards since their inception in 2000. Representatives address the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system, both in developing policy and influencing service delivery.

Although the Navigator program is completed, it did serve to increase awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and employment–related needs of people with disabilities at local One–Stops. The result is that One–Stop staff have established and maintain contact with NMDVR counselors throughout the state.

The Operator of the One–Stop Provider in the Central and Northern regions of New Mexico sits on the State Rehabilitation Council as a business representative. He has committed to improving greater collaboration and resource sharing in both regions.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services. (General)

Youth with a disability: Services provided to an individual with a disability, aged 14–24, not in school; or who does not qualify for services under IDEA. VR may provide youth with disabilities who are in transition from secondary school to postsecondary education and employment. The term is typically associated with services provided under the Workforce System.

Student with a disability: A student who is eligible for and receiving special education under IDEA or be considered a person with a disability under Section 504, and not younger than the earliest age allowable under IDEA or a state established age if lower, and not older than 21 or a higher age if set by state law as permitted under IDEA. Individualized plan developed by the public school systems for a special education student which identifies educational goals, objectives and services to be provided to the student. In the state of New Mexico when a student reaches age 14, his or her IEP should also include a transition plan that addresses services and support focused towards post–school outcomes.

Services provided by DVR to students with disabilities and youth with disabilities in collaboration with local educational & community agencies to provide exploration and other services such as counseling and self–advocacy training in the early stages of the transition process.

Required activities of Pre–Employment Transition Services (PETS) include: Job Exploration Counseling, Work–based learning experiences such as internships, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary training, Job readiness skills training to develop social and independent living skills, and self–advocacy skills.

The Division can authorize activities which include: implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); applying evidence–based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and
the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section; developing model
transition demonstration projects; establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships
involving states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities
agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and
disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of
individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

With the implementation of WIOA in July, 2015 the Division will now be required by law to
significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of
DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with
local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work
opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the
provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for
individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422).
NMDVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for
provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which
cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To
accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community
rehabilitation programs within the State; and (General)

Geographically, New Mexico is a large state in land mass with many areas of the state sparsely
populated. Many rural areas have few, if any, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs). Along with
Rio Grande corridor from Taos in the northern part of the state to Las Cruces in the south, is a
concentration of community rehabilitation providers in the larger communities of the Greater
Albuquerque Metropolitan area, Socorro, and Las Cruces. The northeast quadrant, southeast
quadrant, and the southwest quadrant are the areas most affected by the lack of service providers.

A case in point: the town of Raton in the northeast quadrant currently has no CRP available to
provide supported employment services. It is noted that before supported employment services can
be agreed upon with a CRP, the individual must also be on the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid
Waiver for the long–term funding. A service provider will need to be capable of offering services to
the communities of Cimarron (41 miles) and the community of Angel Fire (80 miles) one way. Other
communities served by the DVR office, such as Clayton (83 miles), Eagle Nest (65 miles), Springer
(38 miles), Maxwell (about 23 miles), and Ute Park (about 50 miles) Many of these areas do not
have the benefit of CRP services. Note: all mileage is one–way distance and the listed communities
are not all inclusive of northeast New Mexico served by the DVR Office.

The same holds true for southeastern New Mexico in Lea County. There are two community
rehabilitation providers in the town of Hobbs where DVR has a two–person office. Both of these
community rehabilitation providers are available only to individuals who live in Lea County to such
places as Tatum (50 miles north) and Eunice (50 miles south). One provider specializes in mental
health while the other provider specializes in developmental disabilities. All recipients of these
services must have long–term funding in place before supported employment services are rendered.

In Southwestern New Mexico, DVR has a two–person office in Silver City where there are two
community rehabilitation providers. Both providers make services available to residents in Silver City
and Deming (50 miles) but not to the other communities served by the DVR office such as Mimbres
(30 miles), Lordsburg (50 miles), Animas (80 miles), and Reserve (85 miles). Note: all mileage is
one–way distance and the listed communities are not all inclusive of northeastern New Mexico
served by the DVR Office.
3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (General)

The Division can authorize activities which include: implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); applying evidence–based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section; developing model transition demonstration projects; establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

With the implementation of WIOA in July, 2015 the Division will now be required by law to significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). NMDVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

NMDVR is proposing a three–year expansion plan in which it plans to add 50 FTE’s over the next three years, or 16 FTE’s per year starting in SFY 17. This will include 21– Transition Specialist Vocational Counselors (TRVC) and 2– Transition Coordinators. Justification for the additional FTE’s are based on that NM currently has 195 high schools that will need transition services from NMDVR with our proposed TRVC additions. This allows for each TVRC to serve 9 high schools and carry a caseload of 83 transition students a year. Currently NMDVR is spending on average $940,000 a year on pre–employment transition services. The requested 21 TVRC positions are needed to, at a minimum, double our transition expenditures to meet WIOA requirements of $2.5 million. The two transition coordinators are needed to fulfill the requirement of WIOA for the Southern and Northern sections of the state. A Comprehensive Statewide Assessment needs to be done in SFY 17 to determine the needs for Individuals with Disabilities for transition career services and pre–employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division is an organizational unit of and works with the Public Education Department to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free
appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency. The Division also works with local education agencies to coordinate student referrals to the Division field offices and provide for eligibility determination of the student for vocational rehabilitation services and the development and approval of the Individual Plan for Employment before the student leaves the school setting.

To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce. The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). Currently the memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

k. Annual Estimates (General)

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services; (General)

The total number of New Mexicans with disabilities who could potentially be eligible for services and who may or may not apply for vocational rehabilitation services is unknown at this time. Although NMDVR remains on an Order of Selection, all categories have been, and continue to be open since September 2012. There are currently no wait lists for services.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under: (General)

A. The VR Program; (General)

The following estimates are for non–PETS services in FFY2017:

Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title I: FFY 2017 Estimate = 9,500.

Estimates for Pre–employment Transition Services: In addition to the above estimates, NMDVR expects to provide specific Pre–employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities as directed in the Rehabilitation Act as amended in WIOA in 2014. Estimated number to be Served: 2,500
B. The Supported Employment Program; and (General)

Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title VI: FFY 2017 Estimate = 420.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection; (General)

Category (non–PETS)

Priority 1: Most Significantly Disabled Title I 1,670
Priority 1: Most Significantly Disabled Title VI 420
Priority 2: Significantly Disabled Title I 6,840
Priority 3: All Other Eligible Title I 570

PETS Category

Priority 1
Estimated Cost: $877,057
Estimated Number to be Served: 550
Average Cost per Student: $1,594

Priority 2
Estimated Cost: $1,496,156
Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800
Average Cost per Student: $831

Priority 3
Estimated Cost: $206,067
Estimated Number to be Served: 150
Average Cost per Student: $1,373

Total Estimated Cost: $2,579,580
Total Estimated Number to be Served: 2,500
Total Average Cost Per Student: $1,032
3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and (General)

NMDVR continues to have all priority categories open. From fall 2012 to present (FFY 2016), all eligible participants are being served and no wait lists are in place.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category. (General)

NMDVR has requested state matching funds for State FY 2017 necessary to draw down all available federal match. The estimates below are subject to approval of the increased state matching funds.

The following estimates are for non–PETS services in FFY2017:

- Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title I: FFY 2017 Estimate = 9,500.
- Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title VI: FFY 2017 Estimate = 420.
- Number of eligible individuals in the state who achieve a suitable (consistent with client’s skills, aptitudes, and interests) employment outcome for a minimum of 90 days: FFY 2017 Estimate = 800.
- Number of eligible individuals in the state who are most significantly/significantly disabled persons achieving a suitable (consistent with clients skills, aptitudes, and interests) employment for a minimum of 90 days: FFY 2017 Estimate = 740.
- Estimated costs of services: FFY 2017 budgeted for non–PETS services approximately $9,218,252.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is under an Order of Selection. The table below provides estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (non–PETS)</th>
<th>Priority 1, Title I: Most Significantly Disabled</th>
<th>Estimated Funds: $3,134,206</th>
<th>Estimated Number to be Served: 1,670</th>
<th>Average Cost of Services: $1,877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1, Title VI: Most Significantly Disabled</td>
<td>Estimated Funds: $244,500</td>
<td>Estimated Number to be Served: 420</td>
<td>Average Cost of Services: $582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2, Title I: Significantly Disabled</td>
<td>Estimated Funds: $5,346,586</td>
<td>Estimated Number to be Served: 6,840</td>
<td>Average Cost of Services: $782</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 3, Title I: All Other Eligible</td>
<td>Estimated Funds: $737,460</td>
<td>Estimated Number to be Served: 570</td>
<td>Average Cost of Services: $1,294</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Estimated Funds: $9,462,752 Total Estimated Number to be Served: 9,500

Estimates for Pre–employment Transition Services: In addition to the above estimates, NMDVR expects to provide specific Pre–employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities as directed in the Rehabilitation Act as amended in WIOA in 2014.

With final regulations pending, it is difficult to estimate the number of students that will be provided the five core services under PETS. Below is a chart providing estimates based on the expected fifteen percent set–aside amount of Title I funds for these services. That amount is estimated at $2,579,580 if all state match is available.
PETS Category

Priority 1
Estimated Cost: $877,057
Estimated Number to be Served: 550
Average Cost per Student: $1,594

Priority 2
Estimated Cost: $1,496,156
Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800
Average Cost per Student: $831

Priority 3
Estimated Cost: $206,067
Estimated Number to be Served: 150
Average Cost per Student: $1,373

Total Estimated Cost: $2,579,580
Total Estimated Number to be Served: 2,500
Total Average Cost Per Student: $1,032

I. State Goals and Priorities (General)

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed (General)

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

Mission Statement: The mission of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to encourage and assist the efforts of New Mexicans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in their communities.

Vision Statement: Every New Mexican with a disability has the opportunity to contribute to the quality of life and the economic prosperity of the state.
The State Rehabilitation Council and the Division jointly reviewed the results of the 2015 updates to the Satisfaction and Needs survey reported below, taking into account Standards and Indicators and input from the SRC.

Goals and priorities identified by the Division take into account the results of comprehensive statewide needs assessment report of May 2012 addressed later in this text. An update was performed in 2015.

State Goals and Priorities align with Federal Standards and Indicators. For purposes of this Attachment, the reported figures are Federal Fiscal Year.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. (General)

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop and collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance.

State Goals and Priorities were aligned to provide the appropriate level quality services to increase the number of individuals with disabilities, as stipulated by the data sets below, while assisting them to gain, regain, preserve, or develop their ability to pursue employment.

Projected and Actual Federal Standards and Indicators from previous years were reported by Federal Fiscal Year as described below.

Provide at the appropriate level quality services to increase the number of individuals with disabilities, as stipulated by the data sets below, while assisting them to gain, regain, preserve, or develop their ability to pursue employment.

A. Projected number of clients served for FFY 2017 – 9,500.

B. Increase the number of persons achieving an employment outcome consistent with the client’s skills, abilities, aptitudes, and interests. Employment outcomes will be for a minimum of 90 days, FFY 2017 Projected 800.

C. Increase the number of clients with significant disabilities served (coded significant disability at eligibility), FFY 2017 Projected 6,840.
   – 2014 Projected/Actual:10,808/5,072 – 2015 Projected/Actual:10,900/5,060

D. Increase the number of persons with most significant/significant disabilities achieving an employment outcome consistent with their skills, abilities, aptitudes, and interests, FFY 2017 Projected 740.
Individuals with the most significant disabilities, include their need for supported employment services. The following goals and activities for supported employment are planned during 2014–2015: Continue to provide Title VI–B services to clients in active status in pursuit of goals established in Individualized Plans for Employment. Approximately 420 clients will be provided Title VI–B services during the 2017 Federal Fiscal Year. This is not significant increase in participants, however, this will include an emphasis on services to youth with most significant disabilities as directed in the 2014 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.

Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI–B services: 1. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted or if Title VI–B funds are rolled up into Title1 at the federal level. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long–term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non–disabled peers performing similar work continue to be emphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. One result of this collaboration in FFY 2014 was the training of 16 field staff in the Discovery process for non–traditional career development. Discovery is a customized employment process that gathers information through activities of daily living that can be translated into possibilities for meaningful and purposeful job placement. The goal of this activity is successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for Supported Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 10. NMDVR has an Intergovernmental Agreement with UNM Center for Development and Disability to continue training programs under Project Search. This intensive career training program includes multiple youth with most significant disabilities. This effort is in keeping with the emphasis on serving this population via Title VI finds with the 50% set aside establish under WIOA.
Overarching Division strategies addressing rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and individuals with the most significant disabilities include their need for supported employment services. The primary strategy directly related to addressing rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and those with significant disabilities including supported employment needs is to reduce turnover and fill vocational rehabilitation counselor positions. The Division is addressing both career development and succession planning in our long-term strategic planning goal of having an operational, comprehensive Career Development/Succession Planning system capable of meeting the expansion needs and innovation needs of the rehabilitation services delivery system inclusive of administrative supports to competently reinforce the rehabilitation services delivery system. The agency has surveyed staff in terms eligibility for retirement, whether staff are interested in returning to employment after retirement, and the career enhancement needs of staff so that they can prepare themselves for potential movement into leadership roles. NMDVR has made decreasing the vacancy rate a priority and is committed to maintaining low vacancy rates in FFY 2017 and beyond.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas: (General)

See following Sections.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates; (General)

Statewide Needs Assessment Goals and priorities identified by the Division are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment report of July 2015. Some of the findings from the Statewide Needs Assessment are as follows:

Overall, the NMDVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey findings demonstrate that the NMDVR staff is providing program participants with an extremely satisfying level of service. The high number of consumers that reported being satisfied with the NMDVR services supports this finding. The results show that 86.2% of the respondents reported being either extremely satisfied or satisfied. Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 63.0% of the respondents stated being satisfied with NMDVR’s services, this represents a 23.2% increase in overall consumer satisfaction since 2012.

Similarly, almost 100% of the respondents reported being treated with courtesy and respect by their counselors (97.7% said “Yes”). Likewise, when asked if the other NMDVR staff treated them with courtesy and respect, 96.6% said “Yes.” Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 83.2% stating NMDVR staff were courteous, this represents an increase of 14.5% in staff courteousness.

The NMDVR counselors also received high customer satisfaction ratings for their responsiveness. Respondents stated being very satisfied or satisfied with their counselor’s response to emails and phone calls (86.9%). Likewise, when asked if their counselor was responsive to their requests for service, 95.2% stated “Yes.” The majority of respondents also reported they feel NMDVR understands their disability (86.0% stated “Yes”). Of the respondents’ reported barriers to employment, education and training was reported to be the biggest challenge with 58.7% of the consumers citing this as a barrier. The respondents’ desire for education and training is further exemplified by the areas with which they identified needing assistance (job development 43.1%; education 41.7%; training 43.1%). Medical services was cited as the second most common barrier to employment at 33.3%, with transportation and mental health services being cited equally as the third and fourth most common barrier (27.0%).
It is noted that the State’s Goals and Priorities outlined in this Attachment align with the Standards and Indicators. However, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has recommended the following to support and enhance the State’s Goals and Indicators:

Ultimately, the goal of DVR is the employment of individuals with disabilities. In general, the employment rates of people with disabilities in the United States after receiving vocational rehabilitation services are consistently found to be around 60%. The fact that NMDVR clients exhibited a 53.6% employment rate shows that services provided to clients by NMDVR staff are approaching national average performance.

B. the State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (General)

State performance now align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop and collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance in these areas.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107. (General)

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) has implemented a corrective action, as of July 1, 2014, for State Fiscal Year 2015. As of that date, the period of eligibility criteria was implemented and applied to all federal grant expenditures. All grant expenditures, and the associated match, have been recorded in the year of appropriation, which is within the twelve-month of the initial grant period. NMDVR implemented a revised accounting process to ensure the recording of federal grant expenditures and associated state match expenditures, as well as program income and funds transfers from other agencies that also are used as match, in the state SHARE accounting system.

m. Order of Selection (General)

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe: (General)

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services. (General)

Description of Priority categories

It is the policy of NMDVR to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals under an order of selection. Under the order of selection, the Division has established three priority groups. Every individual determined to be eligible for services is placed in the appropriate priority group
based upon the documentation used to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs. Selection and placement in a priority group is based solely upon the significance of the eligible individual’s disability, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual.

The priority groups are:

(1) Priority Group 1. Eligible individuals with a most significant disability are persons:

a. Who have a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously impedes the individuals functional capacities in three or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, cognitive abilities, or work tolerance or attendant factors) in terms of an employment outcome; and
b. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple and intensive vocational rehabilitation services in order to result in an employment outcome.

(2) Priority Group 2. Eligible individuals with a significant disability are persons: a. who have a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, cognitive abilities, or work tolerance or attendant factors) in terms of an employment outcome; and b. for whom vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

(3) Priority Group 3. Other Eligible individuals are persons with a disability who meet eligibility criteria, but do not meet the definition of a significant or most significant disability.

B. The justification for the order. (General)

Budget reductions experienced during fiscal years 2009–2013 had resulted in limited financial and personnel resources. Analysis of available resources resulted in a projection that by February, 2011, NMDVR lacked sufficient resources to provide services to all eligible individuals. The Division, in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, determined the necessity of implementation of an order of selection which ensures service delivery to eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities, first, individuals with significant disabilities second, and individuals with a disability third.

FFY 2017 is budgeted at approximately $9,462,752, including $244,500 Title VI funding, for non-PETS services. Program income remains budgeted at $400,000. It is estimated that NMDVR will serve 9,500 individuals for federal fiscal year 2017. This projection could change based on funding and personnel available to serve participants. NMDVR continues to have all priority categories open. As of fall 2012, all eligible participants are being served and no wait lists are in place.

Vacancy rates, while recently improving, have been the primary factor necessitating remaining in an Order of Selection. At present, it is unknown whether the PETS set aside requirement will trigger a return to wait lists.

C. The service and outcome goals. (General)

Priority Category 1 Number of individuals to be served: 2,185 Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 66 Number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 131 Cost of services: $3,378,706
Priority Category 2 Number of individuals to be served: 6,840 Estimated Number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 547 Estimated Number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 273 Cost of services: $5,346,586

Priority Category 3 Number of Individuals to be served: 475 Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 19 Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 71 Cost of services: $ 737,460

PETS Category

The 2014 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA includes a 15% set–aside of federal match for Pre– employment services (PETS) to students with disabilities. The following chart estimates the number of students, timeline and cost for PETS services. Since students who are potentially eligible for VR services may receive PETS, there is a potential that some students who are not yet eligible for NMDVR services would continue to receive the five core PETS services (job exploration counseling, work–based learning experiences, counseling regarding post–secondary opportunities, workplace readiness training and self–advocacy training). Students found eligible, but not yet in “Service” status under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP), would be placed on a wait list for services if a list for their priority group had to be implemented. NMDVR does not anticipate initiating wait lists in FFY 2017, however this could change based on final regulations, funding match, staff vacancies and referral rates.

PETS Priority 1 Estimated Cost: $ 877,057 Estimated Number to be Served:550 Average Cost per Student: $1,594

PETS Priority 2 Estimated Cost: $1,496,156 Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800 Average Cost per Student: $ 831

PETS Priority 3 Estimated Cost: $ 206,067 Estimated Number to be Served: 150 Average Cost per Student: $1,373

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order. (General)

Time within which goals are to be achieved (all priority categories): 10/01/2016 – 09/30/2017

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and (General)

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order NMDVR shall continue to plan for and provide services to all participants being served under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to, and at the time of implementation of the order of selection irrespective of the severity of the participant’s disability. Participants that have been moved off of the waiting list and who are receiving services will also continue to do so regardless of whether their priority group is closed. Participants shall be placed in priority categories at the time of eligibility determination.

Depending upon Division resources, the categories shall be closed for services in ascending order beginning with Category 3 and proceeding to Categories 2 and 1. Services shall be provided only to those individuals in an open category. Individuals with the most significant disabilities (priority category 1) will be selected for services before all others.
NMDVR will inform each participant on their caseloads:

(1) Of the priority groups in the order of selection; (2) If eligible, of the individual’s assignment to a priority group; (3) Of the individual’s right to appeal that assignment; (4) If eligible and in a priority group not being served, that they can remain on a waiting list until such time that the priority group is served; and (5) Of information and referral services available to all applicants.

Cases in eligible status within a closed priority group will be placed in delayed status and remain on a waiting list until such time as resources allow for the release of cases to be served. No IPE will be written for cases on the waiting list. Staff will continue to take applications, diagnose and evaluate all applicants to determine eligibility and assign a priority group. If an eligible participant is placed in a closed priority group, the case will go on the waiting list and no IPE will be written.

When analysis of resources indicates the ability to open a priority group, the staff will receive notice along with a list of participants on their caseload who can be removed from delayed status. Eligible participants will be released from delayed status based on priority assignment and their application date, releasing those with the earliest application date. Staff will contact identified participants to develop and implement their Individualized Plan for Employment. Any participant with an IPE that existed prior to the date an order of selection was implemented, irrespective of their priority group, will continue to receive services as planned. Such an IPE may be amended if the changes are necessary for the individual to continue progress toward achieving an appropriate employment outcome, or are other Wise necessary within policy. Persons requiring post-employment services will also be provided the necessary services regardless of priority group assignment.

Information and referral services will remain available to eligible participants who are not in an open priority group. These participants will be given information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and will be appropriately referred to Federal and State programs (other than the vocational rehabilitation program) including other components of the statewide workforce investment system. No IPE will be written to provide such services to these individuals.

All priority groups were open as of fall 2012. On-going assessment of expenditures, expenditure projections for new (not yet written) Individualized Plans for Employment, PETS set aside requirements and staff vacancies continue to be used to determine the need to close one or more priority categories in FFY2017.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment. (General)

NMDVR has not elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

The 2014 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA includes a 15% set-aside of federal match for Pre– employment services (PETS) to students with disabilities. Since students who are potentially eligible for VR services may receive PETS, there is a potential that some students who are not yet eligible for NMDVR services would continue to receive the five core PETS services (job exploration counseling, work–based learning experiences, counseling regarding post–secondary opportunities, workplace readiness training and self–advocacy training). Students found eligible, but not yet in “Service” status under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP), would be placed on a wait list for services if a list for their priority group had to be implemented. NMDVR does not
anticipate initiating wait lists in FFY 2017, however this could change based on final regulations, funding match, staff vacancies and referral rates.

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds. (General)

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. (General)

Continue to provide Title VI–B services to clients in active status in pursuit of goals established in Individualized Plans for Employment. Approximately 420 clients will be provided Title VI–B services during the 2017 Federal Fiscal Year. This is not significant increase in participants, however, this will include an emphasis on services to youth with most significant disabilities as directed in the 2014 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.


Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI–B services: 1. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted or if Title VI–B funds are rolled up into Title I at the federal level. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long- term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non–disabled peers performing similar work continue to be emphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. One result of this collaboration in FFY 2014 was the training of 16 field staff in the Discovery process for non–traditional career development. Discovery is a customized employment process that gathers information through activities of daily living that can be translated into possibilities for meaningful and purposeful job placement. The goal of this activity is successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for Supported Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles
information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 10. NMDVR has an Intergovernmental Agreement with UNM Center for Development and Disability to continue training programs under Project Search. This intensive career training program includes multiple youth with most significant disabilities. This effort is in keeping with the emphasis on serving this population via Title VI funds with the 50% set aside establish under WIOA.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including: (General)

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

(General)

Extended services are provided after DVR case closure and are primarily provided by DD Waiver funding allocated through DOH/DDSD. These funds are intended to provide long term services and support and may include additional employment needs such as long term job coaching, on–site advocacy and job advancement and job retention opportunities as needed for the life–time of the job. Additional resources for long term services and supports may also be provided through natural supports such as family, friends, employers and other community contacts. It is noted that time limits are not defined in the Division’s Manual of Operational Procedures; rather, each case is assessed in terms of individual needs for supported employment services.

Youth Development Inc. (YDI) and the Office of the State of New Mexico, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), are establishing a collaborative partnership to facilitate the transition of youth (ages 14 to 22) from YDI Educational programs to the achievement of their desired post–school outcomes, with a focus on employment; post–secondary education; training and lifelong learning; community participation; and healthy lifestyles; as well as facilitating provision of transition services to all participants who attend YDI programs. YDI and DVR enter into this formal collaboration for the provision of services that allows youth to obtain training through the provision of Career Planning: (the provision of a client–centered approach in the delivery of service, designed to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement). Career Pathway: (a combination of rigorous and high–quality education, training, and other services that includes counseling to support individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals).

NMDVR plans to utilize the 50% of Supported Employment funds set aside for youth with most significant disabilities to provide extended services, for up to four years, under the Partners for Employment and Project Search programs described in previous sections as well as extended services related to the partnership with YDI.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. (General)

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is
working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

o. State’s Strategies (General)

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities. (General)

The Division continues to expand and improve services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, to individuals who are minorities, or individuals who have been unserved or underserved. Client data is examined to determine increased utilization of services in specific areas. Additionally, testimony received in public hearings that supports this data is considered. When budget expansion request is requested, final approval of such action by the Public Education Department, the Legislature and the Governor enacts the decision. The Division’s FY2017 General Fund Appropriation Request was $6,569,000. This reflects an increase of $876,000 over the FY2016 Operating Budget. The Division continues to collaborate with the Governor’s Commission on Disability on two initiatives: 1) increase direct services and support personnel services to deaf – blind individuals through existing community providers and 2) transfer of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program from the Division to the Governor’s Commission. This transition is now complete.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis. (General)

NMDVR has distributed video relay interpreter equipment in area offices where live interpreting is limited. Training of field staff on use of this technology is completed. While live interpreters are always the preference, this technology allows for improved access to VR services by deaf and hard of hearing applicants and participants, especially in rural areas.

Assistive technology services and devices are primarily identified as part of the Individualized Plan for Employment on a case–by–case basis for each participant.

The New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) provides a loan bank of technological devices to participants. Staff members on the NMTAP provide technical assistance and demonstrations on various devices. The NMTAP is now transferred to the Governor’s Commission on Disability, but will remain a resource to VR staff and participants.
3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program. (General)

Benefits advisement services are provided to enhance participation in VR by Social Security disability beneficiaries who tend to be underserved. Services aid to address concerns about the effect of employment on benefits as well as provide information regarding incentives and benefits of employment.

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

The Division continues to explore ways to improve services to American Indian populations as well as increasing staff competencies with respect to cultural differences. NMDVR recently updated a Memorandum of Understanding with Pueblo of Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation towards coordinated provision of services. Coordination and outreach with other American Indian vocational rehabilitation programs in the state is on-going. Addition of a Native American Liaison position is part of the agency’s goals, but is not anticipated in the next program year.

NMDVR currently has one contracted Veteran outreach coordinator (VOC) and is working to expand to two VOC’s in SFY17. Each VOC will conduct outreach services to either the Southern half or Northern half of the state, separated by the I-40 landmark. Currently the total "veteran clients" reached by the VOC is roughly 160 veterans. VOC is working on compiling data to track their current status individually. Many veterans are moving forward with NMDVR Services and others have been referred to other services (i.e. Social Security, Workforce Solutions, Federal VA, Vet Centers, and many other places) which are intended to help the veterans’ readiness for DVR services and employment. The VOC follows each veteran through both external and internal DVR processes to ensure veterans stay engaged in services.

Division resources will determine priority and further development of these broad general goals of Career Development, Successful Employment Outcomes, and DVR–SRC Collaboration:

1. Career Development Develop, create, increase, and improve specific training at Rehabilitation Academy specific to / incorporating Native American issues such as: – Cultural competency issues, – identifying / listing statewide community services providers specific to Native Americans and making this information available to all counseling staff / teams – Best practices in developing professional relationships with the 121 Programs in the state (who’s who, where located, 121 Program Strengths, and their employment outreach activities) – The array of services 121 programs offer (what they actually offer / provide and not what is specified by law, to learn how best to dovetail DVR services / strengths with 121 Program services /strengths – Dual participation of Native Americans in both 121 Programs and State VR, citing the laws / rules that govern this – have 121 Program Directors participate and/or do the topic presentations / training at Rehabilitation Academy – identifying best practices already employed by DVR counseling staff / teams that could be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy
2. Successful Employment Outcomes
   a. Target increased successful employment outcomes of Native American participants as a strategic goal of the Division. This will help give focus and direction to achieving such a goal.
   b. Explore self-employment opportunities with Native American DVR participants who have expressed desire to remain in their community with their business and/or those who want to locate their business in both their community and in the larger community.
   c. Develop working collaborative partnerships with statewide community services providers with outreach and/or specific services to Native American populations, such as Zia Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.; Abrazos Family Support Services; Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs; Native American Disability Las Center, Inc.; and of course, the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state.
   d. Many DVR counselors and staff who have expertise and/or have established networks with services to Native American populations: Gallup, Farmington, Rio Rancho, Taos, and other DVR venues. Their expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all DVR counseling staff/teams.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

   (General)

   With the implementation of WIOA in July 2014 each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre-employment transition services, (4) attend person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre-employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre-employment services (WIOA 419).

   To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce. The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). Currently the memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles.

   Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements. NMDVR plans to provide the five core Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students throughout the state largely via these intergovernmental agreements. Core PETS services provided directly by agency staff will also be tracked as part of the 15% set-aside.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State. (General)
The agency Supported Employment Coordinator continues to act as a resource for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and vocational rehabilitation staff. While the agency maintains a memorandum of Understanding with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, efforts will be made to identify additional service providers and to maintain or improve relationships with existing CRPs.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. (General)

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop data bases to collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance.

Elements of the Division’s Performance Improvement Plan includes: 1. Develop innovative strategies to increase program outcomes in difficult economic times. 2. Develop effective partnerships with participants, employers, vendors and others as appropriate, to improve participants’ outcomes and therefore program outcomes. 3. Effectively and efficiently monitor and manage activities and expenditures for all programs for optimal performance. 4. Obtain necessary state match to capture all federal rehabilitation dollars available to NM. 5. Effectively implement an Order of Selection for participant services (priority of service) due to funding cuts. 6. Implement innovative technology alternatives to improve communication, climate, and performance. 7. Prepare for retirement or loss of key staff (Recruitment and Retention).

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities. (General)

NMDVR continues to be actively involved as a Workforce Development partner in New Mexico. A representative from NMDVR attends meetings with other Workforce Development partners. NMDVR has strategized components which will aide other statewide workforce development systems in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Over the past year The DVR Business Support Specialist has been engaged with developing and evaluating the success of strategic workforce planning and developing relationships between NMDVR and other workforce entities in example: Wagner–Peyser, WIOA, YDI, Apprenticeships, and TAA. NMDVR will strive to maintain this high level of cooperation and participation.

Current strategies which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment based strategies: • Use of NMDVR AWARE Service J indicator. FY2015 and beyond Service J coding in the AWARE system will be relied upon by the Business Support Teams in identification of Employment ready clients. • Continue established partnerships to promote Education, Training and Career (ETC) events on a quarterly or more frequent basis, begin to include other partners to the events by provide collaboration across partner organizations to increase participation of youths with disabilities to participate in education, training and employment opportunities • Promotional activities geared towards the NMDVR service of ADA consultation which can be utilized by other components/agencies in the statewide workforce development system. • NMDVR will continue to work towards strengthening relationship between OFFCP and NMDVR. • NMDVR will offer training to other agencies with regards to NMDVR services, processes and
requirements. • NMDVR will strive towards improvements in communication and coordination of services around individual job seekers to better leverage resources available through multiple systems utilizing a referral process • NMDVR will continue to work with staff for their better understanding of Labor Market strategies, • NMDVR will make strides towards providing employment experiences or On the Job training activities in the community. Through this strategy, mutual customers can provide experience that may lead to permanent employment. • NMDVR will continue expand engagement of the business sector as a partner in developing career pathways for youth with disabilities in high–growth industries

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to: (General)

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment; (General)

The primary strategy to achieve agency’s goals and priorities continues to be filling vacant vocational rehabilitation counselor positions and reducing turnover. A statewide hiring freeze in recent years lead to delays in filling vacant positions. Positions are now being advertised and positions continue to be filled.

With the implementation of WIOA in July 2015 DVR will now be required by law to significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

NMDVR is proposing a three year expansion plan in which it plans to add 50 FTE’s over the next three years, or 16 FTE’s per year starting in SFY 16 contingent on funding. The following is a breakdown of positions requested and type of FTE: • 21– Transition Specialist Vocational Counselors(TRVC) • 2– Program Managers (PM) • 2– Administrative Assistance (AA) • Field Operations Specialist Supervisor (FOSS) • 4– Field Operations Specialist (FOS) • Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) • 14– Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors(SVRC) • Transition Coordinators • 2 Business Support Specialist

Justification for the additional FTE’s are as follows: • General Caseload's demographics have increasing number of mental health disabilities that significantly impact the severity of disabilities served and prolonging DVR services for clients with them. Current 4 year average is NMDVR sees 3000 mental health disabilities a year or 46 clients with significant mental health disabilities per caseload (Aware data) • Current 4 year average for transition students is 1746 clients a year or 27 transition students per caseload. • Currently NM has 195 High schools that will need transition services from NMDVR with our proposed TVRC additions. This allows for each TVRC to serve 9 high schools and carry a caseload of 83 transition students a year. • Currently NMDVR is spending on average $940,000 a year on pre–employment transition services. The requested 21 TVRC positions are needed to, at a minimum, double our transition expenditures to meet WIOA requirements of $2.5 million. • Addition of 2 PM’s and 14 SVRC’s will bring NMDVR field span of control down from 14 employees per supervisor to an average of 6 per supervisor which is in line with business standards. • Addition FOSS and FOS positions are needed to cover all 10 operational
areas of the state, currently DVR only has FTE’s to cover 6 out of 10 areas. • Operational Area 1 needs an additional VRC to bring their caseload average down to NMDVR average of 91 clients per caseload. Currently with 5 VRC’s area 1’s average is 126 clients per caseload. • Operational Area 2 needs an additional VRC to bring their caseload average down to NMDVR average of 91 clients per caseload. Currently with 5 VRC’s area 2’s average is 136 clients per caseload. • 2 more transition coordinators are needed to fulfill the requirement of WIOA for the Southern and Northern sections of the state. • 2 more Business support specialists are needed to fulfill the requirement of WIOA and work with employers in the southern and northern part of the state.

Expanding the number qualified personnel providing direct participant service will do much to address suggestions made as a result of the latest update to the needs assessment. The identified needs of improved customer service and increased access by participants to training programs would both be addressed by increased staff available to serve participants and increased staff time/expertise available to identify, develop and procure specialized training programs.

In addition to expanding the number of personnel, NMDVR is planning customer service trainings to enhance quality and consistency of service. The agency is also providing specific Supported Employment training to current field staff. This will serve to increase staff expertise in identifying customized employment and individualized training strategies for participants.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and (General)

NMDVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding “Partners for Employment”. This innovative state-wide contract brings together a variety of both in-state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non-traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support NMDVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 NMDVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), and Best Buddies (Long term provider) where ten (10) students and (2) Adults began cohort 1 Project Search program at UNM Hospital. Results from cohort one nine (9) interns completed the program with 75% employment placement success within the community, (5 placed at UNM Hospital, 2 placed at Embassy Suites, 1 placed at University of New Mexico). Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. The Division is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Project Search programs across the state. DVR collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work. NM DVR employs Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each Project Search site. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address Social Security Disability and social Security disability Income benefits income and impact to employment.
The Division has established a replica of Project Search in New Mexico. Currently, UNM Hospital and Hilton Garden Inn Gallup are providing training and internship rotations for 19 students. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. Collaboration with several state partners, including the NM Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, Gallup McKinley schools, UNM/CD, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), UNM Hospital, Hilton Garden Inn Gallup, and Best Buddies (Albuquerque Long term provider) and Empowerment (Gallup Long term provider) have been established.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

Reserved Title I funds have traditionally been used to support innovation and expansion operations and activities of both the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This support continues.

The Division’s FY2017 General Fund Appropriation Request was $6,569,000. This reflects an increase of $876,000 over the FY2016 Operating Budget.

The Division continues to collaborate with the Governor’s Commission on Disability on two initiatives: 1) increase direct services and support personnel services to deaf – blind individuals through existing community providers and 2) Transfer of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program from the Division to the Governor’s Commission. This has now been completed and the program continues to be available for NMDVR participants.

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program. (General)

Strategies to address barriers to equitable access of and participation in state Vocational Rehabilitation Services include:

1. Use of Video Relay Interpreter services. NMDVR has distributed video relay interpreter equipment in area offices where live interpreting is limited. Training of field staff on use of this technology is now complete. While live interpreters are always the preference, this technology will allow for improved access to VR services by deaf and hard of hearing applicants and participants, especially in rural areas. 2. Collaboration with Behavioral Health Services. NMDVR continues work toward intra–agency collaboration dealing with behavioral health services among all agency/divisions in the New
Mexico Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (BHPC). 3. Collaborative partnerships with statewide community service providers. 4. Filling vacant rehabilitation counselor positions and reducing turnover. 5. Addressing the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system both in developing policy and influencing service delivery, through representation on State Workforce Boards. 6. Strategies to address barriers to equitable access of and participation in state Supported Employment Services include: 7. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted, or in the event that Title VI–B funds are rolled into Title I at the federal level. 8. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 9. Continue to seek long–term funding support from agencies providing supported employment.

The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. NM DVR works diligently with collaborating partners to assure and provide services that will mitigate and/or prevent potential barriers to employment. Some of the activities that DVR participate in include:

Active participation on a variety of committees and board memberships that reviews data with the focus on service outcomes with specific goals and objectives that are targeted throughout each fiscal year. As systemic issues are identified, collaboration with partnering agencies are developed to address identified barriers and concerns.

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long–term support funding by the State is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

**p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals (General)**

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must: (General)

   A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals. (General)

   The Division continues to expand and improve services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, to individuals who are minorities, or individuals who have been unserved or under–served.
Client data is examined to determine increased utilization of services in specific areas. Additionally, testimony received in public hearings that supports this data is considered. The following data represents achieved goals as per the most recently completed program year.

State’s Goals and Priorities for the Federal Fiscal Year 2015 (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015): 1. Number of participants served = 9,364 2. Number of persons achieving a viable employment outcome consistent with the client’s skills, abilities, aptitudes, interests, and a minimum of 90 days = 824 3. Number of participants with most significant/significant disabilities served (coded significant disability at eligibility) = 8,501 4. Number of persons with significant disabilities achieving a viable outcome consistent with their skills, abilities, aptitudes, interests, and a minimum of 90 days = 519 5. Number of Title VI–B served clients in active status = 409

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of goals and priorities are varied as indicated below: 1. Rehabilitation Academy is available to new and less experienced staff, and to more experienced staff as a refresher. 2. Field fiscal processes are being reviewed by Field Operation Specialists in most areas to maximize efficiency while maintaining compliance with all regulations and standards. 3. Case and caseload reviews are conducted by field program managers routinely utilizing standardized instruments and monthly data reports. 4. Coaching and mentoring are provided by field program managers and lead counselors in field program to promote quality service delivery, support and guidance, and consistent practice. 5. Memoranda of Understanding are developed jointly with the Public Education Department, local school districts, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, the Behavioral Health Division, to promote collaboration and create systemic improvements. 7. Performance appraisal measures have been standardized to enable cumulative performance aligned with agency goals. 8. Staff is recognized annually to promote an additional incentive to exceed individual and agency goals. 9. Attainment of CSPD standards: newer counseling staff are required to become licensed. 10. Efforts are made to attract higher qualified staff. 11. Continued planning and efforts to reduced ratio of staff to Program Managers allowing more time to managers to focus on Area needs, promote staff development, services to clients, and continuous quality improvement. 12. Factoring in data from Participant Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment recommendations for improved best practices.


B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities. (General)

The agency has experienced vocational rehabilitation counselor and staff turnover in recent years, this has created significant staffing challenges. Although vacancies are being filled, there are a number of less experienced counselors on a learning curve. The achieved employment outcome percentage is expected to improve as new counselors become increasing experienced.

The agency is operating under an Order of Selection. In the fall of 2012 all individuals were moved off of the waiting list. The expected increase in the number of participants served and resulting employment outcomes has occurred. However, it will take more time to realize an increase in the employment outcome percentage of all closures (standard 1.2 & 1.6).
2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

(General)

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

(General)

Number of Title VI-B served clients in active status = 409 Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI-B services included:

1. Continue to use Title VI-B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI-B funds are exhausted. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee-for-services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long-term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non-disabled peers performing similar work continue to be emphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote "Employment First" principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment.

Strategies that contributed to achievement of goals included use Title VI-B funds for case services exclusively, purchase of supported employment services from programs on either a fee-for-services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, long-term funding support from agencies providing supported employment, and working with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans.
Other strategies that continue to contribute to achievement of supported employment goals are the devoted SE Coordinator who provides technical support as well as intra and interagency coordination. The SE Coordinator, along with identified area Supported Employment Liaisons (one in each area), monitor SE referrals and follow up toward success in supported employment services.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities. (General)

Less case service under Supported Employment occurred due Order of Selection. Case Service is expected to gradually increase as participants have been moved off the waiting lists and are served under Individualized Plans for Employment.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA. (General)

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop data bases to collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance. The division did not meet prior WIA standards and indicators in FFY 2015 for 1.2 and 1.6. Other prior Standards and Indicators were met or exceeded as indicated below: Standards &Indicators INDICATOR 1. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES 1.1 Achieved Employment Outcomes Numerical (Indicator must exceed or equal previous performance period) • FFY 09: 1545 • FFY 10: 1541 • FFY 11: 1219 • FFY 12: 683 • FFY 13: 740 • FFY 14: 720 • FFY 15: 824 1.2 Achieved Employment Outcomes Percentage (Indicator must = 55.8%) • FFY 09: 55.2 • FFY 10: 52.3 • FFY 11: 50.7 • FFY 12: 43.4 • FFY 13: 40.44 • FFY 14: 47.44 • FFY 15: 45.68 1.3 Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program (Indicator must = 72.6%) • FFY 09: 97.9 • FFY 10: 98.2 • FFY 11: 98.9 • FFY 12: 97.1 • FFY 13: 97.16 • FFY 14: 96.61 • FFY 15: 97.56 1.4 Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Who Were Significantly or Most Significantly Disabled (Indicator must = 62.4%) • FFY 09: 94.7 • FFY 10: 96.9 • FFY 11: 96.3 • FFY 12: 98.0 • FFY 13: 95.41 • FFY 14: 90.70 • FFY 15: 91.70 1.5 Average Hourly Earnings Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Ratio of Least Minimum Wage to Average Hourly Earnings of all Employed New Mexicans (indicator must = 0.52\(\text{Ratio}\)) • FFY 09: 0.65 • FFY 10: 0.65 • FFY 11: 0.60 • FFY 12: 0.60 • FFY 13: 0.58 • FFY 14: 0.58 • FFY 15: 0.57 1.6 Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Reporting Own Income as Largest Single Source of Economic Support Reported at Closure as Reported at Application (Indicator must = 53.0 [Mathematical Difference]). • FFY 09: 49.7 • FFY 10: 51.6 • FFY 11: 52.4 • FFY 12: 60.0 • FFY 13: 57.163 • FFY 14: 55.391 • FFY 15: 49.934 2. EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES 2.1 Individuals with Disabilities from Minority Background as ratio to all Non–Minority Individuals with Disabilities. (Indicator must = 0.80). • FFY 09: 0.88 • FFY 10: 0.85 • FFY 11: 0.88 • FFY 12: 0.90 • FFY 13: 0.914 • FFY 14: 0.918 • FFY 15: 0.854

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized. (General)

Reserved Title I funds are used to support innovation and expansion operations and activities of both the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This support will continue.
The Division continues to collaborate with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Commission for the Blind to increase services to deaf–blind individuals through existing community providers.

DVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding “Partners for Employment”. This innovative state–wide contract brings together a variety of both in–state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non–traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support DVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 DVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico, Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD) to consider establishing a replica of Project Search in NM. Project Search is an internationally known program that originated at Cincinnati’s Children’s Hospital. It focuses on school–to–work transition age students who are diagnosed with a variety of disabling conditions. The DVR Interim Transition Coordinator had the opportunity to attend the Project Search conference in July. In collaboration with several state partners, including the NM Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, UNM/CDD and the NM University Hospital (UNMH) as well as the Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD) and Best Buddies (a local provider agency), the Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. The site for Project Search has been selected and approved. Program space intended for training and internship rotations has been established at UNM Hospital. Teachers and job coaches have been hired. Ten (10) students and two (2) adult candidates have been interviewed and selected for the program. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at UNM Hospital in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. The program is slated to begin in August of 2017 and expected to run through June of 2018.

BENCHMARKING – The NMDVR measures products and services against standards set by the federal government and its own past performance. For the Rehabilitation Services Program, the agency uses Federal Standards and Indicators, set by regulation, which do not require the Rehabilitation Services program to achieve all of the performance measures.

**q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. (General)**

Include the following:

**1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities. (General)**
New Mexico DVR has implemented two additional programs that are intended to expand and increase Supported Employment services throughout the state. These services are targeted to youth and individuals who have been identified as most severely disabled through innovative programs under the umbrella of Partners for Employment. The first program, Project Search was implemented in 2012–2013 to provide opportunities in collaboration with statewide school districts, and business partners in conjunction with DOH, toward access to employment opportunities that are unique and innovative in serving individuals with significant disabilities. Partners for Employment is identified as the statewide entity to oversee and manage a variety of Supported Employment Programs. This program is intended to serve and support individuals with a variety of disabiling conditions.

Examples of NMDVR plans to utilize the 50% of Supported Employment funds set aside for youth with most significant disabilities to provide extended services, for up to four years, include Partners for Employment and Project Search.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

2. The timing of transition to extended services. (General)

NMDVR’s policy is that all individuals who are eligible and receiving Supported Employment services must at a minimum require these services for a period of 6 months or longer. Transition to extended services is dependent upon individual participant need and stabilization in employment. Therefore, extended services will vary based upon client need.

Certifications (General)

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate: New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Name of designated State agency: New Mexico Public Education Department

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Hipolito "Paul" Aguilar

Title of Authorized Representative: Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

States must provide written and signed certifications that:
1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**  Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;  Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;**  Yes

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 the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;  Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.  Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.  Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;  Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;  Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.  Yes

**Footnotes (General)**

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

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

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State (General)

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation (General)

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements. The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(General)

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(General)

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” in accordance with its instructions.
(General)

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance (General)

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment (General)

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements. The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(General)

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
(General)

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(General)

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance (General)

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant’s Organization  New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Full Name of Authorized Representative:  Hipolito "Paul" Aguilar

Title of Authorized Representative:  Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

Assurances (General)

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR
services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. **Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: (General)**

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. **Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: (General)**

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. **Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: (General)**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (General)

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**
f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: No

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. No

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (General)

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: (General)

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual’s eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)
c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (General)

Agency will provide the full range of services described above   No

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed 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 of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 101(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs (General)

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

   i. has developed and will implement,
      A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
      B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and

   ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

(General)

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement: (General)
a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act. (General)

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: (General)

a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State’s allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services: (General)

a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. (General)

b. The designated State agency assures that:
i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act

ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(General)

Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State (General)