



**TO:** Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) Committee

**FROM:** Kevin G. Smith 

**SUBJECT:** ACCES-VR Strategic Plan Final Recommendations

**DATE:** February 2, 2015

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Discussion**

To provide the Board of Regents with information on the final recommendations from the ACCES-VR strategic plan to improve the service delivery system and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

For Information.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This item will come before the Board of Regents ACCES Committee at its February 2015 meeting.

#### **Procedural History**

In February 2014, ACCES provided the Board of Regents with a progress report on the ACCES-VR Strategic Planning process. ACCES-VR has completed its strategic planning process and the primary recommendations are summarized for the Board of Regents review.

#### **Background Information**

ACCES-VR initiated a Strategic Planning process to identify recommendations which would enhance and improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Setting the stage for this process were several factors, particularly the

chronically low employment rate for individuals with disabilities which has hovered around 31 percent for the past 25 years. In addition, to the challenge of increasing the employment rate, there has been a renewed emphasis on competitive integrated employment through federal and state initiatives. For example, in 2014, the United States Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) issued regulations for federal contractors and their subcontractors to ensure that 7% of their workforce consists of people with disabilities.

Early in the Strategic Planning process, six priority areas were identified and teams were formed to address each area:

- Service Delivery – the vocational rehabilitation process and scope of services;
- Communications and Public Information – communicating our purpose to stakeholders.
- Aligning Partnerships and Alliances – working with schools, colleges, State agencies and other community partners;
- Operations and Fiscal Management – aligning resources to support program goals;
- Human Resources and Accountability – developing the necessary talent; and,
- Technology – how technology can improve organizational effectiveness;

Using existing data and survey results, focus groups, newly developed surveys, and ongoing staff and State Rehabilitation Council member input, each team developed recommendations. The attached Strategic Plan Executive Summary outlines the key recommendations from each of these teams and highlights those initial implementation steps that have commenced.

The Strategic Planning Design Team completed presentations of its recommendations to staff at each ACCES-VR District Offices, to the State Rehabilitation Council and to the community rehabilitation providers. While several of the recommendations identified are underway, such as developing the RFP for the new case management/fiscal system and the Rochester Service Delivery Pilot, the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan will depend on identifying ongoing responsibility for the many recommendations, providing needed approvals and support, and establishing a mechanism for evaluating progress and making needed modifications as ACCES-VR moves forward. Implementing each team's carefully considered and developed recommendations will increase ACCES-VR's effectiveness as an agency and result in moving toward its Vision: All individuals with disabilities who want to work will have the opportunity to achieve employment and independence.

### **Next Steps**

ACCES will implement its VR Strategic Plan to enhance and strengthen the vocational rehabilitation role in assisting New Yorkers with disabilities in gaining meaningful employment.

Attachment