


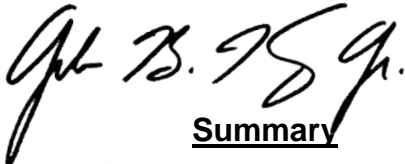


TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Kevin G. Smith 

SUBJECT: Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program

DATE: May 13, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
Summary

Issue for Approval (Consent Agenda)

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program, effective October 1, 2013, is presented for your approval.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the Full Board at its May 2013 meeting for approval.

Procedural History

Each year, the Board of Regents approves the Amendment to the State Plan that must be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration by July 1.

Background Information

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, requires that New York State prepare a State Plan that informs the public of the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) goals, priorities and performance in providing vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services to individuals with disabilities in New York State. This document, entitled State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program, Effective July 1, 2001, was previously submitted by ACCES-VR and approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

The Rehabilitation Act further requires that each state annually amend its approved State Plan in specific areas, as requested by RSA, through the submission of updated attachments. These required updates provide information relating to: the comprehensive system of personnel development; state assessments; estimates; goals and priorities; reports of progress; strategies; and innovation and expansion. The Amendment to the State Plan for 2014 consists of specific attachments for these topics and is based on the most recent guidance provided by RSA. For information on the current Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program Federal Fiscal Year 2013 go to:

http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/adult_vocational_rehabilitation_services/state_plan/about.htm

ACCES-VR, in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), jointly developed the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supported Employment Services Program, Federal Fiscal Year 2014. ACCES-VR has updated the **Coordination with Education Officials, Attachment 4.8(b)(2)** to reflect the most current activities related to serving transition-age youth. In addition, the **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Attachment 4.11(a)**, conducted jointly with the SRC, describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Finally, **State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funding for Innovation and Expansion Activities, Attachment 4.11(d)** includes updated information on the design of Core Rehabilitation Services with community rehabilitation programs and ACCES-VR's strategic planning initiative.

RSA reviews and approves the submission of the State Plan amendments annually which is necessary by the State to ensure that its plan and supplement reflect the current administration of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. Funding for the state vocational rehabilitation program and supported employment program is appropriated upon approval of this State Plan Amendment. The attached summarizes the content of the State Plan Amendment. The complete plan amendment is available in the Regents Office for your review.

Recommendation

VOTED: that the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services, effective October 1, 2013, is approved.

Timetable for Implementation

Upon approval by the Regents of the State Plan, it will be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration for review and approval, as required, prior to July 1, 2013.

Attachment

Summary of Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program Federal Fiscal Year 2014

ACCES-VR

The New York State Education Department is the designated state agency for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. The Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) is the designated state unit to provide services to individuals with disabilities (other than those who are legally blind). ACCES is comprised of three primary areas: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Independent Living, Adult Education and the Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision. The State Plan is focused on ACCES-VR.

State Plan Process

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, requires that New York State (NYS) prepare a State Plan that informs the public of the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services–Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) goals, priorities and performance in providing VR and supported employment services to individuals with disabilities in New York State. This document, entitled State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program, Effective July 1, 2001, was previously submitted and approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The Rehabilitation Act further requires that each state annually amend its approved State Plan in specific areas, as requested by RSA, through the submission of specific updated attachments. The Amendment to the State Plan for 2014 consists of these specific attachments and is based on the most recent guidance provided by Rehabilitation Services Administration.

ACCES-VR, in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), jointly developed the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supported Employment Services Program FFY 2014. ACCES-VR consulted with the SRC throughout the year on critical aspects of the State Plan development process, including the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the rehabilitation needs of residents with disabilities and to identify gaps in VR services, and the joint planning of the State Plan public meetings.

The SRC provided comments and advice on the content of the State Plan. The previous year's Amendment to the State Plan (FFY 2013) was used to solicit input and recommendations from the public on planned activities related to the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities for the next year.

As part of the State Plan development, ACCES-VR requested public comments from February 18, 2013 through March 18, 2013 regarding the State Plan amendments. Three public meetings were held, one each in the Capital District, Binghamton and Manhattan during February 2013, and a statewide video-conference with a facilitated discussion with the ACCES-VR Deputy Commissioner was broadcast to Buffalo, Hauppauge, Malone, Mid-Hudson and Syracuse ACCES-VR district offices in March 2013.

The meetings focused on improving the percentage and quality of employment outcomes for all eligible individuals who want to work and were receiving VR services, and to give the public an opportunity to comment on NYS's implementation of the VR program. Prepared questions facilitated a discussion with participants on how to assist individuals to find and keep work, what actions would promote greater engagement of individuals with disabilities in completing ACCES-VR services leading to employment, and what would strengthen employment opportunities for these individuals.

Public Meetings

To notify and inform the public about the meetings on the State Plan, ACCES-VR emailed flyers that gave specific details on the State Plan public meetings, including the meeting dates, times and locations. The flyers were sent to consumers, stakeholders, community agencies, schools, Independent Living Centers and support groups. ACCES-VR also utilized the newsletters, faxes and the internal communication processes of several community rehabilitation providers and associations to advertise the public meetings.

ACCES-VR further advertised the public meetings through the ACCES-VR website and the public was able to provide written comments through the vrpolicy@mail.nysed.gov email box.

The public meetings were designed to provide ample opportunities for participants to review and discuss their ideas about ACCES-VR's State Plan, policies, future direction and how the VR Program could better assist individuals to obtain and maintain quality employment. At all of the meetings, ACCES-VR provided a brief presentation on the State Plan and provided data and information related to the key questions. ACCES-VR staff facilitated the discussion, and public participants remained free to offer comments or recommendations on any part of the State Plan and its process. Time was reserved during each meeting for participants to provide testimony and make specific statements.

The public meetings were attended by 114 individuals; 65 in person and 49 via video-conference. Participants included 28 ACCES-VR staff and five SRC members. A few written comments were provided, but no testimony. The recommendations received during the public comment period were reviewed, shared with leadership and the SRC for consideration, and will be posted on the ACCES-VR website.

Amendment of the State Plan: Required Attachments

The following attachments describe ACCES-VR's plans, policies and activities in a number of areas as part of this Amendment. The sections of the Amendment to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Supplement for Supported Employment Services Program, FFY 2014 include:

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanation for Rejection of Input or Recommendations: Attachment 4.2(c)

- Summarizes the advice of the SRC on State Plan and policy development. ACCES-VR responses to SRC are also included.

Coordination with Education Officials 4.8(b)(2)

- Describes ACCES-VR efforts to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school employment at the statewide and local levels. ACCES-VR has a new State Education Agency Agreement (SEA) with the Office of P-12 Education, effective January 1, 2013, that outlines the collaborative and coordinated responsibilities of each office to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities to post-school employment.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD): Attachment 4.10

- Describes ACCES-VR activities that ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals in conformance with its CSPD. The CSPD calls for ACCES-VR to utilize the highest national standard, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), as the goal in recruitment and retention of counselors.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA): Attachment 4.11(a)

- Documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly developed by ACCES-VR and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years. The assessment describes the rehabilitation (and other) needs of residents with disabilities and the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Service: Attachment 4.11(b)

- ACCES-VR estimates that during FFY 2014, about 29,200 individuals with significant or most significant disabilities will become eligible for ACCES-VR services. This is a decrease from previous years.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds (Supported Employment): Attachment 4.11(c)(4)

- Indicates that ACCES-VR plans to continue to fund supported employment services utilizing Federal Title VI, Part B and other funds.

State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funding for Innovation and Expansion Activities: Attachment 4.11(d)

- Describes how ACCES-VR plans to use a portion of Title I Funding to innovate and expand VR services. This attachment is updated to include information in several areas including the design of Core Rehabilitation Services with community rehabilitation programs and ACCES-VR's strategic planning initiative.

Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities: Attachment 4.11(e)(2)

- Describes ACCES-VR progress in achieving the goals and priorities, as required by regulation and agreed to with the State Rehabilitation Council.