



Idaho Division of  
Vocational Rehabilitation

2016 - 2020

## Content and Format

The Plan is divided into four sections. The first three sections describe the programs administered under the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR). Each of the programs described, Vocational Rehabilitation, Extended Employment Services, and the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, outline specific goals, objectives, performance measures and benchmarks for achieving their stated goals. The final section addresses external factors impacting IDVR.

Since Federal and Idaho State governments operate according to different fiscal years, and since IDVR is accountable to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on a federal year basis (October 1 – September 30), the agency will use federal year statistics for reporting the Vocational Rehabilitation program portion of IDVR. Any comparisons noted in benchmarks will reflect the most complete FFY data available. Since the Extended Employment Services and the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs are state funded only, all reporting will be based on a state fiscal year. This Plan will cover fiscal years (SFY) 2016 through 2020.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation**

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Vision Statement**

“Your success at work means our work is a success.”

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Mission Statement**

“Preparing individuals with disabilities for employment and community enrichment.”

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Goals**

**Goal #1 – To provide excellent and quality customer service to individuals with disabilities while they prepare to obtain, maintain, or regain competitive employment and long term supported employment.**

1. **Objective:** To provide customers with effective job supports including adequate job training to increase employment stability and retention.

**Performance Measure:** To enhance the level of job preparedness services to all customers.

**Benchmark:** Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2016 to meet or exceed FFY 2015 performance.

**Benchmark:** The average hourly wage of all successful rehabilitations in FFY 2016 will exceed FFY2015 year's average hourly wage.

**Benchmark:** Identify and provide workforce development opportunities for customers specifically in the area of "soft skills" development.

2. **Objective:** To increase employment successes for transition age youth.

- A. **Performance Measure:** To work with Idaho school districts, Special Education Directors, and the State Board of Education to identify and assist transition age youth both internal and external to School-Work Transition projects.

**Benchmark:** The number of transition age youth exiting the IDVR program who achieved an employment outcome in FFY 2016 will exceed FFY 2015 performance.

**Benchmark:** The number of applications for transition aged youth entering the IDVR program in FFY 2016 will exceed FFY 2015 performance.

- B. **Performance Measure:** To provide increased work opportunities while in high school.

**Benchmark:** Evaluate potential mechanisms to support internships and mentorships for customers transitioning from high school.

3. **Objective:** To increase customer engagement in the VR process.

**Performance Measure:** Increase customer awareness of vocational information and the decision making process through informed choice.

**Benchmark:** The number of first time approved plans in FFY 2016 will exceed FFY2015.

**Benchmark:** The rehabilitation rate of individuals exiting the IDVR program in FFY 2016 will meet or exceed the Federal performance standard of 55.8%.

4. **Objective:** To offer benefit planning to all customers receiving SSI and/or SSDI entering, during and exiting the IDVR process to include Partnership Plus.

**Performance Measure:** To provide information and referral material to customers initiating and completing the IDVR program, specifically Partnership Plus and Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities.

**Benchmark:** Increase Social Security reimbursements to VR in FFY 2016 from FFY 2015 performance.

**Benchmark:** Increase the number of referrals to the WIPA program for benefits counseling in FFY 2016 from FFY 2015 referrals.

## **Goal #2 - To provide organizational excellence within the agency.**

1. **Objective:** To increase the focus of customer service within the IDVR delivery system.

**Performance Measure:** Provide all customers a satisfaction survey when exiting the IDVR program.

**Benchmark:** Maintain a customer satisfaction rate of at least 90% as demonstrated by “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings on customer surveys in FFY2016.

2. **Objective:** To comply with State and Federal regulations.

**Performance Measure:** Enhance the quality of a statewide program and evaluation system.

**Benchmark:** Demonstrate compliance with state and federal regulation through both internal and external audits with zero findings in FFY 2016.

3. **Objective:** Utilize training to its maximum capacity for effective staff performance.

- A. **Performance Measure:** Provide all IDVR staff training on policy and procedural changes throughout the agency.

**Benchmark:** Zero audit findings on State and Federal reviews in FFY 2015.

- B. **Performance Measure:** Develop strategies to work effectively with employers and community business organizations.

**Benchmark:** Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2016 to meet or exceed FFY 2015 performance.

4. **Objective:** IDVR will maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) standard for IDVR counselors.

**Performance Measure:** Evaluate and track annually IDVR counselors' maintenance of CSPD or progress toward achieving CSPD.

**Benchmark:** Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will maintain all CSPD standards for their position annually. All Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists will continue to work toward and/or achieve meeting CSPD standards in FFY 2016.

### **Goal #3 - To have strong relationships with our stakeholders and partners engaged in the mission of Vocational Rehabilitation.**

1. **Objective:** For IDVR to be recognized as the expert in the workforce needs of the business community for individuals with disabilities.

- A. **Performance Measure:** To develop a Business Relations position.

**Benchmark:** Implement a Business Relations position in FFY 2016 that will be a resource to employers and staff statewide.

- B. **Performance Measure:** To enhance business networks with employers to include involvement with the Idaho Association of Business and Industry, the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and human resource organizations.

**Benchmark:** Increase the number of different occupational categories hiring IDVR customers in FFY 2016 from FFY 2015.

- C. **Performance Measure:** To enhance relationships with the Regional Business Specialists from the Department of Labor.

**Benchmark:** Increase the number of different occupational categories hiring IDVR customers in FFY 2016 from FFY 2015.

2. **Objective:** Continue to provide partners and stakeholders on-going opportunities to receive information and allow for input into the IDVR process.

**A.** *Performance Measure:* Continue to meet with stakeholders and partners to facilitate communication and understanding of each programs system.

*Benchmark:* Increase the number of applicants entering the IDVR process in FFY 2016 from FFY 2015 performance.

**B.** *Performance Measure:* Continue outreach strategies and information provided to partners and stakeholders.

*Benchmark:* Increase the number of successful rehabilitations in FFY 2016 to meet or exceed FFY 2015 performance.

## Extended Employment Services

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### Mission

Idahoans with significant disabilities are some of the state's most vulnerable citizens. The Extended Employment Services (EES) Program provides people with significant disabilities employment opportunities either in a community supported or workshop setting.

### Vision

Provide meaningful employment opportunities to enable Idaho's Most Severely Disabled to seek, train-for and retain real work success.

### Goal #1 – Continually improve the quality and quantity of Extended Employment services available to eligible Idahoans.

1. **Objective:** Develop and emphasize customer centered services offering increased choice, flexibility and opportunities for meaningful employment.

**Performance Measure:** Provide appropriate levels of long-term support to maximize individual's independence in employment.

**Benchmark:** Five percent reduction in program waitlisted customers.

**Benchmark:** Increase customer choice.

**Benchmark:** Transparency in customer centered allocations.

## **Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)**

### **Role of CDHH**

CDHH is an independent agency. This is a flow-through council for budgetary and administrative support purposes only with no direct programmatic implication for IDVA. The following is the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Strategic Plan.

### **Mission**

Dedicated to making Idaho a place where persons, of all ages, who are deaf or hard of hearing have an equal opportunity to participate fully as active, productive and independent citizens.

### **Vision**

To ensure that individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing impaired have a centralized location to obtain resources and information about services available.

### **Goal #1 – Work to increase access to employment, educational and social-interaction opportunities for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.**

1. *Objective:* Continue to provide information and resources.

*Performance Measure:* Track when information and resources are given to consumers.

*Benchmark:* Create and maintain several brochures and other information about employment, education and social-interaction.

### **Goal #2 – Increase the awareness of the needs of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing through educational and informational programs.**

1. *Objective:* Continue to increase the awareness.

*Performance Measure:* Give presentations to various groups through education and social media.

*Benchmark:* Present to various organizations including corrections, courts, schools, veterans groups, and businesses about the needs of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Goal #3 – Encourage consultation and cooperation among departments, agencies, and institutions serving the deaf and hard of hearing.**

1. *Objective:* Continue encouraging consultation and cooperation.

*Performance Measure:* Track when departments, agencies, and institutions are cooperating (such as Department of Corrections and Health and Welfare.)

*Benchmark:* Present to various local, state, and federal (if requested) agencies about the need for cooperation providing services needed for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

**Goal #4 – Provide a network through which all state and federal programs dealing with the deaf and hard of hearing individuals can be channeled.**

1. *Objective:* The Council's office will provide the network.

*Performance Measure:* Track when information is provided.

*Benchmark:* The Council will continue to maintain a network through their website, brochures, telephone calls, video phone calls and personal communication.

**Goal #5 – Determine the extent and availability of services to the deaf and hard of hearing, determine the need for further services and make recommendations to government officials to insure that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing citizens are best served.**

1. *Objective:* The Council will determine the availability of services available.

*Performance Measure:* The Council will facilitate meetings to determine the needs.

*Benchmark:* The Council will continue to monitor the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force and Findings and Recommendations for Provision of Mental Health Services from the Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Report 2014, as issued by the Division of Behavioral Health Analysis and Response to ensure compliance.

*Benchmark:* The Council will support the Legislative process for the Licensure of Sign Language Interpreters.

**Goal #6 – To coordinate, advocate for, and recommend the development of public policies and programs that provide full and equal opportunity and accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing persons in Idaho.**

1. **Objective:** The Council will make available copies of policies concerning deaf and hard of hearing issues.

**Performance Measure:** Materials that are distributed about public policies.

**Benchmark:** The Executive Director of the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will continue to facilitate meetings with different agencies including Health and Welfare, corrections, schools, veteran’s groups, and businesses to create public policy, including Interpreter standards.

**Goal #7 – To monitor consumer protection issues that involves the deaf and hard of hearing in the state of Idaho.**

1. **Objective:** The Council will be the “go to” agency for resolving complaints from deaf and hard of hearing consumers concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Performance Measure:** Track how many complaints are received regarding the ADA.

**Benchmark:** The Council will provide information and create brochures regarding all aspects of the ADA that affect persons with hearing loss. In addition, the Council will partner with the Northwest ADA Center – Idaho to provide accurate information and guidance, on disability, rehabilitation, business, rehabilitation engineering, special education, the build environment, accessibility to buildings, website accessibility, civil rights law, and the role of the ADA Coordinator

**Goal #8 – Submit periodic reports to the Governor, the legislature, and departments of state government on how current federal and state programs, rules, regulations, and legislation affect services to persons with hearing loss.**

1. **Objective:** The Council will submit reports.

**Performance Measure:** Reports will be accurate and detailed.

**Benchmark:** The Council will continue to create and provide periodic reports to the Governor’s office. The Council will continue to present a needs assessment report to certain departments/agencies as needed.

## **External Factors Impacting IDVR**

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The field of Vocational Rehabilitation is dynamic due to the nature and demographics of the customers served and the variety of disabilities addressed. Challenges facing the Division include:

### **Adequate Supply of Qualified Personnel**

IDVR is dedicated to providing the most qualified personnel to address the needs of the customers they serve. Challenges in recruitment have been prevalent over the past several years. Recruiting efforts have been stifled by low wages as compared to other Idaho state agencies as well as neighboring states. IDVR has identified the need to develop relationships with universities specifically offering a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Furthermore, IDVR has identified universities offering coursework for other degree programs that will meet eligibility for the Certification in Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC). Lastly, IDVR has collaborated with the University of Idaho to advance the profession of rehabilitation counseling.

### **State and Federal Economic and Political Climate**

While Idaho has seen some improvement in its economic growth over the past year there are a variety of influences which can affect progress. Influences can vary from natural disasters to international conflicts. Individuals with disabilities have historically experienced much higher unemployment rates, even in strong economic times. Furthermore, Idaho has one of the highest percentages per capita of workers in the country making minimum wage. IDVR recognizes this and strives to develop relationships within both the private and public sectors in an effort to increase employment opportunities and livable wages for its customers.

The political elements are by far the most difficult for IDVR to overcome. At the state level, the Division is subject to legislative action regarding annual budget requests including service dollars and personnel expansion. Any legislation pertaining to service provision either by public or private sectors will have a definite impact on Division services and service providers.

IDVR is also affected by decisions made at the federal level. Significant changes impacting the Vocational Rehabilitation program came into light on July 22, 2014, with the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This law replaces the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which formerly governed the Vocational Rehabilitation program. WIOA includes many substantial changes aimed to improve the nation's workforce development system to help states and local areas better align workforce programs with each other and with the needs of employers for a skilled workforce

While all of the implications to WIOA are still unclear, IDVR is taking steps to strategize and incorporate those changes that can be implemented now. IDVR is also working with the core WIOA partners to develop strategies on initiatives that require joint collaboration, such as the combined plan and common performance measures.

WIOA will require IDVR to implement substantial programmatic changes. These changes will impact policy development, staff training, and compliance reporting requirements. Fiscal and programmatic requirements to increase and expand services to students and youth with disabilities will be challenges the division will need to prioritize and strategically evaluate.

Funding reductions on both the State and Federal level have and will continue to impact partnerships and comparable benefits available to the IDVR. For example, reduced budgets to school districts have impacted collaborative agreements. These agreements have allowed IDVR to use nonfederal funds to match federal dollars, therefore increasing the amount of dollars available to IDVR.

### **Adequate Availability of Services**

Due to the rural nature of Idaho, there are isolated pockets of the state with limited vendor option. This can directly impact customer informed choice. Furthermore, a vendor's inability to meet required credentialing under IDAPA will significantly reduce or eliminate a customer's options. Lastly, changes to other program criteria will eliminate services to customers. A change in Health and Welfare's criteria for the HCBS Medicaid Waiver is one example affecting program services.

### **Technological Advances in Both Assistive Rehabilitation Products and Information Technology**

IDVR recognizes the importance of both information and assistive technology advances as intricate to the success of the division as well as the customers it serves. The cost and rapid changes in these technologies influence the overall program success. IDVR is dedicated to keeping current of the latest trends in both assistive rehabilitation technology and information technology, and in training Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and staff. IDVR employs an Information Technology staff to develop innovative ways to utilize technology in carrying out its mission. IDVR also collaborates with the Idaho Assistive Technology Project through the University of Idaho with center locations throughout the state.

All staff of the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation takes pride in providing the most effective, efficient services available to individuals with disabilities seeking employment. Management is committed to continued service to the people of Idaho. The goals and objectives outlined in the IDVR Strategic Plan are designed to maximize the provision of services to Idahoans with disabilities as well as promote program accountability.