

Kansas Rehabilitation Services

State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation & Supported Employment Services Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2013

Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with education officials

A major program goal of Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) is to emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students. To accomplish this goal, KRS will continue to work with local school officials to facilitate a smooth transition from education to vocational rehabilitation services and employment.

KRS policies and procedures in serving youth with disabilities are influenced by the available level of staff resources. Within these resources, KRS will accept referrals for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from transition students approximately 18 months or three semesters prior to their completion or exit from school. (In individual cases, the KRS Regional Program Administrator may grant an exception to begin providing VR services for a student prior to the 18-month or three semester timeline if there are extenuating circumstances which require VR involvement.) The State Rehabilitation Council has endorsed a policy change proposal that would extend the timeframe for accepting referrals to 24 months or four semesters prior to the exit from school. The agency is continuing to review the fiscal and human resource impact associated with this proposed policy change.

Referrals are encouraged for students who are receiving special education services and students with disabilities receiving services or accommodations as required by Section 504.

Referral timelines are designed to assure that the Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) for students who can be served under Order of Selection are coordinated with Individual Education Plans. IPEs must be written as early as possible during the transition planning process, and no later than when the student exits high school.

In addition, KRS may provide technical assistance, such as participation in IEP meetings or referral to community resources, for students prior to the referral timeline, if existing staff resources are available to make this

possible.

KRS maintains staff liaisons for each public high school to ensure statewide coverage. In addition to working with special education staff, KRS staff contact voc-ed departments, school nurses and guidance counselors to provide greater outreach to students with disabilities and their families.

Consistent with the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1), KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students. In doing so, KRS will pursue opportunities to collaborate with students, families, the Kansas State Department of Education, schools, and other stakeholders. Some examples of implementation actions are:

- All regions are increasing outreach to students, parents and schools. Some examples include: scheduling specific days for counselors to work at schools and meet with students and transition staff; operating informational booths at transition fairs or parent-teacher events; and participating in special events such as Job Olympics.
- As part of the agency's innovation and expansion efforts, in FY 2009 KRS began a demonstration project involving Wichita Public Schools (USD 259), the Kansas Health Policy Authority/Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, and the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning on an innovative service delivery approach. Through this project, transition-aged youth with disabilities have the opportunity to take an elective class focusing on employability skills, goal-setting and empowerment. This portion of the project is funded by non-VR sources. In addition, a VR counselor works closely with the public school system to facilitate outreach to transition-aged students and their families; to encourage referrals and applications for VR services; and to assist in development of paid work experiences and post-secondary exploration activities for students. The demonstration project will be expanded to three additional case study sites for the Fall Semester 2011. These sites are: Garden City High School; Ottawa High School; and the Chautauqua and Elk Counties Special Services Cooperative comprised of high schools in Longton, Howard and Sedan.

Formal interagency agreement between KRS and the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)

This agreement was updated in October 2010, and includes the following goals:

- To facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services provided by KRS and KSDE for students with disabilities.
- To promote the continuous improvement of post-secondary education and competitive, integrated employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.
- To infuse a strengths-based approach to working with youth with disabilities and a culture of high expectations for the achievement of competitive, integrated employment as a measurable outcome for the special education and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services provided.

Further, KRS and KSDE agreed to a wide range of mutual responsibilities, including the following highlights:

- Provide joint professional development, in-service training and informational meetings for school personnel, VR staff, other adult service providers, parents and students. This may include orientation to programs, referral processes, policies, procedures, pertinent legislation and other areas as may be appropriate.
- Offer training and technical assistance to districts and local VR offices on coordinating the transition planning process. Topics in this area may include but are not limited to: inviting KRS counselors to IEP meetings; providing information about VR in the IEP development process; and educating VR counselors about district procedures related to transition planning and services for employment and postsecondary education goals for students with IEPs.
- Collaborate on the State Performance Plan and/or strategic plans developed by each party to facilitate the goals of this agreement and give priority to effective transition services for youth with disabilities resulting in improved post-secondary education and competitive, integrated employment outcomes.
- Use available inter-agency forums, conferences and expertise to develop a coordinated approach to facilitate achievement of the goals of this agreement
- Share student/consumer data and state-level data, to the extent allowed by law, to evaluate the effectiveness of the education and VR services provided.
- Share federal and state monitoring practices and findings for effective program and policy evaluation.
- Participate in technical assistance and advisory opportunities to support the goals of this agreement.

As outlined in the agreement, KRS will provide VR services for students in accordance with KRS policy under the following conditions:

- The student has been determined eligible for VR and can be served within the Order of Selection.
- The student (and his/her parents or representative if appropriate) and the VR counselor have agreed to an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).
- The goods or services provided will be necessary for post-high school training or employment, or will substantially contribute to achievement of the competitive, integrated employment objective on the IPE.
- Employment or post-secondary services provided by VR must occur outside the established school sessions. The term "school sessions" refers not only to the school semester or term, but also to the school day.
- Consideration of comparable benefits and application of the economic need policy are required.

According to the agreement and consistent with regulations, the Local Education Agency/Authority (LEA) is not relieved of any responsibility to provide transition services until the student formally exits the public school program and as long as the student remains eligible for and receives special education services.