

## **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

### **State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation & Supported Employment Services**

**Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2013**

#### **Attachment 4.11(d) State's strategies to achieve goals and priorities; to support innovation and expansion; and to overcome barriers, to the extent they exist, to access to services**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has established the following major goals for FFY 2011-2013:

1. Kansans with disabilities will achieve quality, competitive, integrated employment and self-sufficiency.
2. KRS, its consumers, providers and partners will be accountable for the achievement of employment and the effective use of resources.
3. KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.
4. KRS will emphasize the meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, public/private partners, employers and other stakeholders in KRS programs, services and activities.

These goals, related strategies and data indicators are addressed in detail in Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

To assure implementation, KRS has implemented a "strategies to actions" planning process. This process establishes annual priorities, and uses a logic model to identify specific action steps that will be implemented, persons responsible, start dates, due dates, issues and risks that might impact implementation, deliverables (products or results of work effort), and measurable impact on outcomes and indicators. Each region and central office unit develops such an action plan to assure that focused attention is given to accomplishing the agency's goals and priorities.

#### **Methods to expand and improve services**

When considering opportunities to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, KRS emphasizes strategies that will address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities and people who have been unserved or under-served. Collaborative efforts with consumers, advisory councils, parent groups, advocacy organizations, community rehabilitation programs and other state agencies are undertaken to expand access to VR services and to promote supported employment,

transition planning and assistive technology services.

Innovation and expansion activities are consistent with the findings of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Specifically, the following functions assist KRS in achieving its goals and priorities related to innovation and expansion:

*Workforce development system:* KRS field management staff continue to be part of the Local Workforce Investment Boards, allowing for communication, interagency planning, and cross-informational training to occur with other components of the workforce development system, including One-Stop operators and partner programs. This collaboration is intended to improve access to these services for individuals with disabilities so that they can fully benefit from all the advantages of the system. Memorandums of understanding address issues such as referral procedures and itinerant staffing at one-stops.

*Innovation, continuous improvement and expansion:* KRS promotes expanded community capacity to provide services for people with disabilities through service provider agreements for supported employment, job placement, community-based work assessments, community-based job tryouts, assistive technology, rehabilitation teaching, orientation/mobility and a variety of customer support functions. In addition, KRS staff serve on numerous commissions, advisory boards and interdisciplinary teams to stay current with the needs of people with disabilities, and to identify opportunities for collaborative efforts to improve services. KRS provides \$100,000 in annual support for the Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas. KRS also provides administrative support and direct expenses totaling about \$20,000 annually for operation of the State Rehabilitation Council. These funding arrangements are consistent with 34 CFR 361.35.

*Services for unserved or underserved populations:* Current activities include the following:

- Cooperative working relationships between the SRS oversight units for community developmental disability organizations and community mental health centers address capacity to provide supported employment services.
- KRS and SRS Economic and Employment Support continue to collaborate through regional Integrated Services Teams to serve recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who have disabilities. Consumers benefit by being able to maintain their cash assistance while receive the specialized services they need to achieve employment before their time-limited TANF benefits cease.

- KRS and SRS Children and Family Services coordinate to address the employment and/or post-secondary education needs of youth with disabilities who were in foster care during the two years prior to their exit from high school.
- In-service training will focus on best practices in service delivery for persons who are blind or visually impaired, persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders, persons with traumatic brain injury, and persons with mental illness. Contracted service providers will be included in these training opportunities whenever possible to enhance their expertise in service VR consumers.

*Services for transition-aged youth with disabilities:* Improving outreach and outcomes for transition-aged youth with disabilities is a major focus for KRS.

- All regions continue to increase 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; participating in activities such as Job Olympics; participating in local transition councils; and operating informational booths at transition fairs or parent-teacher events. As a result of increased outreach and services, about 26% of the total persons served are youth with disabilities.
- KRS provides \$150,000 in state-only funding support to the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy through a contract that provides for outreach activities; training and education on the disability rights movement and disability pride to schools and other organizations; the Youth Leadership Forum; and mentoring with students with disabilities.
- KRS is collaborating with the Wichita public school system, the Kansas Health Policy Authority and the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning to develop and implement a demonstration project intended to improve the employment and post-secondary education outcomes for transition youth. Through the *Soaring to New Heights* project, transition-aged youth with disabilities have the opportunity to take an elective class focusing on employability skills; goal-setting; disability awareness, heritage and pride; 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. Numerous school districts throughout the state have expressed

interest in replicating this project to improve outcomes for transition youth with disabilities.

*Services for people who are blind or visually impaired:* To expand and improve the capacity for community-based organizations to provide rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, communications instruction, and assistive technology for persons who are blind or visually impaired, KRS anticipates issuing numerous performance-based contracts for capacity building and direct services in FFY 2010. Specific contracts will be awarded through a negotiated procurement process managed in conjunction with SRS and the Kansas Department of Administration.

*Competitive, integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities:* One of the major strategic goals of KRS is to empower people with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment and self-sufficiency. To advance this vision for people with developmental disabilities, KRS will implement a systems change initiative in FFY 2010. The purposes of the initiative are to:

- Promote and implement replicable models of service delivery and systems change strategies that result in competitive, integrated employment for an increased number of individuals with developmental disabilities who are in sheltered workshops, on waiting lists for waiver services, or in non-work day services.
- Promote a cultural and organizational shift among service providers with a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.
- Establish long-term evidence-based best practices.

The University of Kansas Center for Developmental Disabilities and Virginia Commonwealth University will provide training, technical assistance and evaluation. Direct service demonstration sites will be selected through a competitive negotiated procurement process managed in conjunction with SRS and the Kansas Department of Administration.

## **Outreach procedures**

A wide range of outreach activities are undertaken by regional KRS offices to assure that persons from minority backgrounds and from potentially underserved populations have information about VR services. Such outreach activities also support an open and consumer-friendly process for applying for services. During the past year, outreach activities involved a wide range of organizations, including: correctional facilities, homeless shelters, workforce development service providers, special education personnel, families of youth with disabilities, disability mentors, transition councils, employment and career fairs, mental health centers, community

developmental disability organizations, conferences for persons with head injury, autism, kidney disorders and blindness or visual impairments, faith-based organizations, the Native American Coordinating Council, the Veteran's Administration, substance abuse treatment programs, **the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission**, and disability navigators with the state workforce development system.

KRS maintains an active presence on numerous councils and committees, including:

- The Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas.
- The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns.
- The Kansas Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- The Vocational Sub-Committee of the Governor's Mental Health Planning Council.
- The Governor's Commission on Autism.
- The Working Healthy (Medicaid buy-in program) Advisory Council.
- The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

This involvement facilitates the provision of information about VR services to other disability service organizations, and often results in additional outreach activities or specific referrals.

Integrated service teams within the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), which is the designated state agency, encourage collaborative planning with consumers of other public assistance programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Food Stamps, Children and Family Services, and Child Support Enforcement.

VR counselors participate, within available resources, in Individual Education Plan meetings for transition-aged youth with disabilities to assure that they have information about VR services and how to apply.

### **Assuring access to assistive technology**

KRS policy and practice assures that the assistive technology needs of VR consumers are considered at every stage of the rehabilitation process, and that equipment, devices or services are provided to meet individual consumer needs.

KRS has established assistive technology service provider agreements with eight organizations throughout the state. This process has improved geographic access to services when compared to FFY 2007. Through this provider agreement process, individual consumers are referred for services

such as assessment, functional analysis, training or technical assistance according to their specific needs and goals. Through such a process, consumers have the opportunity to review and analyze assistive technology options and make informed choices about specific services or equipment to meet their needs. Equipment purchases may then be included on Individual Plans for Employment and purchased through VR funds.

Expertise and consultation regarding assistive technology for persons who are blind or visually impaired is also provided through KRS administrative staff.

In addition, KRS provides the following state-only funding to assure access to assistive technology:

- \$10,000 to the Assistive Technology for Kansans project to support the administration of access sites throughout the state, including the equipment demonstration and loan program
- \$125,000 to provide assistive technology to enhance the independent living of Kansas with disabilities. The administration of this state fund is outsourced via contract to United Cerebral Palsy of Kansas (UCPK), Wichita. The state funds are matched with private funds provided through UCPK and other private donors, leveraging additional spending power from the state's investment.

### **Plans to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs**

The State of Kansas currently has no plans to establish new community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). KRS continues to offer opportunities for CRPs to partner in the provision of VR services through service provider agreements.

### **Improving performance related to standards and indicators**

In addition to the specific action planning described above related to achieving agency goals and priorities, in 2009 KRS implemented a new Performance Management Process establishing individual expectations and evaluation standards for all staff. For VR counselors, Rehabilitation Managers and Program Administrators involved in direct service delivery, this performance evaluation system is designed to improve individual accountability and contributions to achieving federal standards and indicators. For example, specific expectations and evaluation standards are established for the number of rehabilitations achieved and the rehabilitation rate.

Regional accountability measures, reported and reviewed monthly by KRS and SRS, address number of rehabilitations and the average wage of persons rehabilitated.

Monthly key indicator reports address all federal standards and indicators at state and regional levels, facilitating analysis and identification of areas for improvement.

The case review system is intended, in part, to identify effective strategies that contribute to the achievement of standards and indicators, and well as to identify areas for performance improvement.

### **Overcoming barriers, to the extent they may exist, to equitable access**

Kansas population statistics and VR consumer statistics have been compared in the information below for a snapshot of whether there is equitable access to VR services among persons of diverse racial and ethnic groups. The Kansas population statistics are based on the U.S. Census Bureau 2009 estimate. The VR consumer statistics are based on FFY 2009 data of persons served. The comparison reveals the following information:

Persons who are white comprise 88.7% of the Kansas population, and 79% of persons served in VR.

Persons who are black comprise 6.2% of the state population, and 14% of persons served by VR.

Persons who are American Indian and Alaska Natives comprise 1% of the state population, and 2% of persons served by VR.

Persons who identify themselves as multi-racial comprise 1.8% of the state population, and 4% of persons served by VR.

Persons who are Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander comprise 2.3% of the state population, and 2% of the persons served by VR.

Persons of Hispanic or Latino original comprise 9.1% of the state population, and 5% of persons served by VR. (Since Hispanic persons may be of any race, they are also represented in the racial categories above.)

KRS is participates in the cultural competence initiative sponsored by SRS.

Through this process, an agency-wide review assessed policies, business practices, and skill development needs. The KRS Field Services Liaison served on the steering committee that conducted this assessment and made recommendations. As this initiative moves forward, KRS will participate in training to address the needs identified and to assure that the agency's workforce is well-prepared to provide services effectively to minority populations.