

Kansas Rehabilitation Services

State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation

& Supported Employment Services

FFY 2011-2013

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

In matters of program administration and planning, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has a strong commitment to seeking the advice of consumers of vocational rehabilitation services, service providers, family members, advocates, employers and others interested in disability issues. Comprised of representatives of these stakeholder groups, the State Rehabilitation Council makes a major contribution to KRS through advice provided during regular business meetings, State Plan work sessions, Policy Committee meetings, and other activities the members determine to be appropriate.

The State Plan and attachments are developed in cooperation with the Council.

Input provided by the Council and KRS response

Council comment – Creating high expectations for employment among transition youth with disabilities and the public education system that supports them

Council members discussed the importance of having an expectation for employment and/or post-secondary education leading to career opportunities for students with disabilities. The Council also expressed the importance of conveying information about disability heritage and a sense of disability pride. The Council's noted its support for KRS goals and priorities in this area, and requested that the agency focus attention on developing informational materials to support these concepts.

KRS response: KRS concurs with the importance of communicating with youth with disabilities, their parents, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and local education authorities to encourage early discussions about the expectation of employment, employment as the avenue to self-sufficiency, the disability rights movement and disability pride. Within available staff and resources, KRS will develop such informational materials. The importance outreach, information and training

has also been addressed in the October 2010 update of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Kansas State Department of Education.

Council comment – Expansion of the Soaring to New Heights demonstration project

Council members expressed their strong support for this innovative demonstration project, and encouraged KRS to pursue opportunities for expansion to other school districts. The Council also expressed its hope that the Kansas State Department of Education would assist in replication funding.

KRS response: The demonstration project will be expanded to three additional pilot sites for the Fall semester 2011. The sites are:

- Garden City High School
- The Chautauqua and Elk Counties Special Services Cooperative (three high schools in the West Elk, Elk Valley and Sedan districts)
- Ottawa High School

In addition, KSDE has committed \$5,000 a year for three years as seed money to help in the expansion. These funds will be used for teacher training on the Soaring curriculum and model.

Council comment – Mileage reimbursement rate for consumers

The Council expressed interest in raising the mileage reimbursement rate paid to consumers.

KRS response: This request was put on hold in light of budget constraints. Council members noted that the agency's response was reasonable given the economic environment.

Council comment – Recruiting for Council membership

The Council Membership Committee recommended that all members and KRS make it a priority to recruit nominees for the Council to broaden the diversity of its membership, to encourage representation from youth with diversity of the membership and to increase the number of business/industry representatives. The Council Chairperson identified his personal mission for his tenure in office to recruit additional members to meet these expectations.

KRS response: KRS supports these efforts and will continue its own recruiting efforts in addition to providing support to Council members actively engaged in recruiting nominees.

Council comment – Policies related to transition planning and economic need

Several years ago the Council researched and recommended proposed policy changes.

- Related to transition planning, the recommendations encouraged KRS to accept applications from transition youth 24 months or four semesters prior to exit from high school. The current standard is 18 months or three semesters.
- Related to economic need, the Council recommended indexing the monthly income exemption to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and exempting individuals receiving TANF, food stamps, GA, Medicaid or Working Healthy benefits from economic need. In addition, considering the additional disability-related expenses borne by consumers and their families, the Council recommended that KRS pay for at least 10% of the cost of services for any eligible consumer.

Although these changes were not pursued due to economic concerns, the Council requested that KRS bring these issues to the forefront for further consideration.

KRS response: KRS will complete an updated fiscal impact analysis in FFY 2011 and review that information with the Council for further discussion or recommendations.

Council comment – Collaboration with community colleges

The Council recommended that KRS pursue cross-informational training and opportunities for further collaboration with the state's system of community colleges. Such collaboration would enhance post-secondary educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, leading to employment.

Summary: KRS concurs and will seek further guidance from the Council during FFY 2011. Collaborative efforts will also be addressed by KRS Regional Program Administrators.

Recommendations from the Annual Report

The Council used its FFY 2010 Annual Report and correspondence to the Governor to review the positive impact of KRS services for people with disabilities and to feature the views of consumers about the value of employment in their lives. In this report, the Council also expressed its enthusiastic support for the KRS Goals and Priorities, as identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1). The Annual Report may be viewed at: http://www.srs.ks.gov/agency/rs/Pages/annual_report/2010_report.aspx

Review and analysis of consumer satisfaction

Stakeholder meetings and consumer satisfaction surveys were not conducted due to budget constraints. The Council expressed their perspective on the importance and value of these activities, and encouraged implementation to the extent possible within existing resources.