

# VR Portion of WIOA State Plan for the State of Kansas FY-2020

## Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

### a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

#### **1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;**

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, Business 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 - Members requested the opportunity to hear about trends impacting the service delivery system for people with disabilities, innovative practices from other states, and self-employment outcomes and emerging research.*

KRS Response:

KRS agrees and these focus areas are ongoing for Council meetings.

For example, information about the state's new protected income level was presented by the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Other topics included presentations about Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the impact of subminimum wage employment for people with disabilities; and the CMS integrated settings rule.

Regular updates about End-Dependence Kansas provide insight on how KRS is implementing nationally recognized evidence-based and promising practices to increase employment options and outcomes for Kansans with disabilities.

*Council comment - Members encouraged KRS to use innovative approaches to assure staff availability throughout the state for direct consumer services, especially in areas where it is difficult to recruit and maintain VR Counselors.*

KRS Response: KRS has established the Program Specialist position to augment staff coverage throughout the state. These positions work in concert with VR Counselors to provide case management services. Only qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have the authority to determine eligibility, sign Individual Plans for Employment, authorize expenditure of VR funds, and make case closures decisions.

*Council comment - The Council is concerned about the high turnover rate among VR Counselor positions and encouraged KRS to look at a variety of options including an increased pay scale, career ladder opportunities, incentives (such as student loan repayment), and internships to give upcoming graduates the opportunity to learn more about working in the public VR program.*

KRS Response: KRS will continue to work with the Kansas Department of Administration Personnel Services and DCF leadership to identify strategies to address recruitment, retention, hiring incentives and internships.

*Council comment: Development of informational materials is needed for use with outreach with schools, referral sources, parents and consumers. KRS should also focus on outreach to organizations such as the Kansas Physical Therapy Association and the Kansas Occupational Therapy Association and speech/language professional organizations. Professionals in these disciplines often have contact with individuals with disabilities and could pass along information about VR.*

KRS Response: KRS will work with DCF Communications and/or contracted resources regarding this request.

*Council comment: The Council endorsed recommendations made by the Kansas Advisory Committee for the Blind and Visually Impaired to modify the KRS maintenance policy, especially pertaining to determining an individual's normal expenses.*

KRS Response: Maintenance means monetary support provided to an individual for expenses, such as food, shelter, and clothing, that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an individualized plan for employment. KRS has requested technical assistance from the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the portion of the recommendation that would exempt the calculation of normal and excess expenses for individuals attending a comprehensive rehabilitation program. A response from RSA is still pending. A second aspect of the recommendation pertained to situations when individuals are not able document their normal expenses. In these situations, the KRS policy enacted in 2013 deemed their normal expenses to be 75% of the maximum SSI amount. The recommendation proposes that normal expenses for individuals attending post-secondary education will be deemed to be 30% of their actual SSI and/or SSDI benefits. KRS plans to implement this portion of the recommendation in FY 2020.

## **Review and analysis of consumer satisfaction**

*Focus groups:* In 2019, the WIOA core partners engaged Kansas State University to conduct focus groups to gauge consumer and employer experiences with the workforce development system. Considering the entire workforce development system, and not KRS only, job seekers reported the following barriers:

- Employer biases based on disabilities, homelessness and criminal background.
- Low paying jobs with no ability for growth.
- Lack of computer skills, email addresses, job search navigation and access to technology.
- Lack of existing mentoring networks and opportunities to create networks.
- Services are valuable but not well known or easy to access.

Job seekers reported the following strengths:

- Specific staff members. (This was noted in particular relation to VR staff members who acknowledged VR staff for “helping them along their path to employment.”)
- Access to computers, printers and phones.
- Job fairs.

*Satisfaction surveys:* KRS contracted with the Learning Tree Institute, Girard, Kansas, to process a consumer satisfaction survey in 2015 as part of the previous Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The survey was distributed to all consumers with open cases, consumers whose cases closed successfully in the previous six months, and consumers whose cases closed unsuccessfully in the previous six months. The survey was based in part on the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which measures three dimensions of satisfaction: overall satisfaction, satisfaction compared to expectations, and satisfaction compared to the ideal. This method was recommended by the Rehabilitation Services Administration following a national study by the Research Triangle Institute and adopted by the State Rehabilitation Council of Kansas.

### **Satisfaction survey results**

At the time the survey closed in order to tabulate results, there was a 12.7% response rate. A total of 812 responses were received from consumers with open cases, 91 from consumers with cases closed successfully, and 42 from consumers with cases closed unsuccessfully.

Mean satisfaction scores: Using the ACSI method, scores of 5 or more represent the perspective of “more satisfied than not.”

Overall, how satisfied are you with Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

- Open cases: 6.78
- Cases closed successfully: 7.67
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.70

To what degree did Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services meet your expectations?

- Open cases: 6.54
- Cases closed successfully: 7.41
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.68

Think of your ideal vocational program for people with disabilities. How do you think Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services compares with your ideal?

- Open cases: 6.78
- Cases closed successfully: 7.67
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.70

In addition, here are the results on other questions posed using the survey:

- 88.8% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed that VR staff are respectful to them.
- 74.9% agreed or strongly agreed that their counselor encourages them to reach their employment goals.
- 70.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they have a better chance of becoming employed because of VR services.
- 67.3% agreed or strongly agreed that their counselor responded within one day to requests for information or assistance. (One day is the KRS customer service standard.)

## **2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and**

For ease of correlating the KRS responses directly to the Council recommendations, this information is included in Section 1.

## **3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.**

KRS did not reject any of the Council's recommendations.

### **b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness**

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

#### **1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;**

KRS is not requesting a waiver of statewideness. This section does not apply.

#### **2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**

KRS is not requesting a waiver of statewideness. This section does not apply.

#### **3. All State plan requirements will apply**

Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

KRS is not requesting a waiver of statewideness. This section does not apply.

### **c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

#### **1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) collaborates and coordinates services with federal, state and local employment and rehabilitation agencies that contribute to the vocational rehabilitation (VR) of Kansans with disabilities. At the local level such collaborations are individualized according to each person's needs and interests. This individualized approach is one of the cornerstones of VR services.

At the state level, KRS collaborates with other units within the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and with other state departments. For example:

- KRS and DCF Economic and Employment Services collaborate to serve recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who have disabilities. Consumers benefit by being able to receive the coordinated and specialized services they need to achieve employment before their time-limited TANF benefits cease.
- KRS and DCF Prevention and Protection Services independent living staff will coordinate to address the employment and/or post-secondary education needs of youth with disabilities who age out of foster care.

- Cooperative working relationships between the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services oversight units for community developmental disability organizations and community mental health centers facilitate discussions about the importance of competitive, integrated employment, an employment-first strategy, evidence-based practices, and supported employment services. Managed Care Organizations coordinate services for HCBS participants with employment goals on plans of care.
- 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 Governor’s Behavioral Health Planning Council and its Vocational Sub-Committee.
  - Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - 5 Local workforce development boards
- A memorandum of understanding with the Prairie Band Potawatomie Nation Native American VR program addresses the coordination of services to help consumers achieve employment.
- To maximize resources and to help consumers access needed services, KRS works cooperatively with numerous other local and state programs, including Working Healthy and independent living centers.
- KRS collaborates with the Department of Corrections and individual correctional institutions to assist individuals with disabilities who are being released from custody to become employed.

## **2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

KRS coordinates with the Assistive Technology for Kansans program on the assessment and provision of individualized assistive technology services for VR consumers. Training on state-of-the art technology is provided to all new VR counselors and program specialists as a key component of their in-service training. KRS is also represented on the ATK advisory committee.

## **3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

When consistent with the Rehabilitation Act and regulations, KRS may use the Rural Development Programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the extent these programs are available to local communities.

## **4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

KRS will coordinate with local workforce operators and Adult Education on employment services for out-of-school youth. The Combined Portion of this Plan includes extensive operational strategies related to youth services. KRS also provides funding for the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy for leadership training, self-advocacy skill development, and mentoring services for youth with disabilities. KRS staff participate in Family Employment Awareness Trainings offered by Families Together and participate in local level planning and referral for Project Search programs. KRS will also investigate how it might assist in the expansion of promising practices to increase employment options and outcomes.

## **5. State use contracting programs.**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services does not participate in the management of the State Use Catalog or purchasing process. It is overseen by the Kansas Department of Administration. As is required of all state agencies, KRS makes purchases from the State Use Catalog, which includes “Products and Services Manufactured and Offered by Blind and Severely Disabled Kansans,” at any time when the listings in that catalog will meet the needs of the agency.

Interaction with state use contracting programs is handled in compliance with the competitive, integrated employment purpose of the Rehabilitation Act and regulations.

## **d. Coordination with Education Officials**

Describe:

### **1. DSU's plans**

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Major goals of Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) are to emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and to improve the outreach and outcomes for students and youth with disabilities. To accomplish this goal, KRS will continue to work with local school officials to implement Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and to facilitate a smooth transition from education to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and employment. This approach provides a continuum of services directed toward additional post-secondary education or direct entry into the workforce.

#### **Pre-ETS**

KRS will reserve 15% of its federal VR funding to provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. Pre-ETS are designed to provide job exploration and other services, such as counseling and self-advocacy training, in the early stages of the transition process.

KRS has built its capacity to provide Pre-ETS through the addition of 20 transition specialists to local VR offices. Each of the four regions also has a Pre-ETS Manager, and KRS employs a Statewide Manager as well. KRS has also established service provider agreements with several of the Local Workforce Development Boards, numerous Centers for Independent Living and the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy pertaining to specific components of Pre-ETS. A major emphasis is paid work-based learning experiences. Such experiences allow students to gain an early attachment to employment as the avenue to self-reliance, explore career options and develop the soft skills that are necessary for long-term employment success. Other services offered through services providers include self-advocacy training, post-secondary education, and workplace readiness training.

According to the Kansas State Department of Education, each year there are about 11,000 youth with disabilities ages 16 to 21 receiving special education services through an Individual Education Plan. These numbers exclude individuals in the gifted program. Also excluded are individuals with Section 504 plans. They represent the target population for Pre-ETS. The number by age are listed below.

#### **Policies and procedures to facilitate the transition of students from school to receipt of VR services**

KRS policies and procedures in providing VR services for youth with disabilities are influenced by the available level of staff resources. Within these resources, KRS will accept referrals for VR services from transition students approximately 24 months or four 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 24-month or four semester timeline if there are extenuating circumstances which require VR involvement.)

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.

## **2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

### **A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

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

This agreement 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.

### **B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

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.

**C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

Mutual responsibilities identified in the formal interagency agreement are specified in Part 2A of this Section.

**D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**

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

Consistent with the goals and priorities in Section L, 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.

All regions are responsible for 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 and Disability Mentoring Day events.

KRS will promote the use the Career Technical Education initiative for students to participate in technical education while in high school. As a result they graduate with a qualifying certificate in-hand and are, therefore, able and prepared for direct entry into the workforce.

**e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

To offer a full array of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to meet the needs and interests of people with disabilities, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) will continue its extensive partnerships with community service providers.

**Manner in which such agreements are established**

Contracts and service provider agreements are established to help KRS consumers achieve their individual employment goals, to increase system capacity for community services, to support innovative approaches to service delivery, to enhance services to specific populations, and to increase consumer choice among available service providers. These contracts and agreements also help KRS maintain geographic distribution of services.

Procedures in establishing such agreements emphasize the role of regional KRS offices to identify needed services and to monitor the usage and effectiveness of the services provided through the agreements. The contracts and agreements define the nature and scope of services to be provided, outcome measurements, procedures for referrals, authorizations, reporting requirements, fees, billing and financial procedures.

Service provider agreements are available for a variety of services, including vocational assessment, independent living assessment, community-based work assessment, community-based job tryout, job preparation, guided placement, customized placement, job coaching, rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology, rehabilitation teaching, comprehensive facility-based training for persons who are blind or visually impaired, and orientation/mobility. These agreements emphasize the development of action plans, strengthened approaches to ongoing communication among KRS counselors and service providers, and accountability measures for successful rehabilitation outcomes.

Service providers participating in these agreements include community rehabilitation programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities, consumer-run organizations, independent living centers, mental health centers, substance abuse programs, assistive technology access sites, and independent contractors. Providers may offer more than one service and serve more than one region of the state.

In addition, state-only funding supports:

- \$125,000 to the Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation (CPRF), Wichita to provide individual assistive technology equipment, devices and services to enhance the independent living of Kansas with disabilities. The state funds are matched with private funds provided through UCPK and other private donors, leveraging additional spending power from the state's investment. In SFY 2019 CPRF assisted 162 individuals in securing equipment valued at a total of \$751,387.
- \$150,000 to the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy for career and leadership training, and mentoring for youth with disabilities. Funding also includes Title VIIB dollars.

## **f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) enters into provider agreements with a variety of community agencies for the provision of supported employment services. Providers include community developmental disability organizations, mental health centers, independent living centers, and other public and private entities. Through customized employment provider agreements, six key components or milestones are specified for supported employment services:

1. Creation of a job development action plan.
2. Placement.
3. Stabilization.
4. 45 days of continuous, successful employment.
5. Finalization of an extended ongoing service plan.

(This plan describes how the supported employment service provider will maintain extended supports once the time-limited VR services end. Or, the plan may describe how the overall community service system will provide the extended supports the consumer will need to maintain employment. These extended supports are not funded with VR dollars.)

6. Successful VR case closure in accordance with all of the requirements set out in federal regulations.

Direct hourly Job Coaching services are provided for VR consumers in conjunction with the Customized Employment milestones services described above. Short and long-term individualized job coaching is also provided through service provider agreements.

The provider agreements also:

- Describe the time-limited services that will be provided through KRS for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Address responsibility of the providers to coordinate with the community service system, which has responsibility for funding and providing the extended ongoing services necessary for the consumer to maintain employment once they exit the VR program.

The Individual Plan for Employment is used as the basis for referral to one of the providers. It also describes the criteria, specific to each consumer, for determining that job performance is stable, determining how and when progress will be evaluated, and describing how extended ongoing support services will be provided. After the consumer reaches stability on the job, the consumer, service provider and VR counselor work together to finalize the plan for extended ongoing supports. This allows the plan to be specific and customized according to the consumer's current work situation and support needs. As a result, the ongoing support section of the IPE may be amended, with the consumer's agreement, in order to reflect the most current information available.

Through the provider agreement requirements and performance benchmarks, KRS' intention is to develop a network of effective supported employment providers whose focus is on the vocational objectives, goals, rehabilitation needs and priorities of the consumers to be served. KRS regional managers meet with providers on a periodic basis to maintain a collaborative relationship in this service delivery system and to address accountability and performance improvement when necessary. In 2020, KRS will implement an enhanced rate for supported employment job coaching conditioned upon the job coach having successfully completed at least one of a variety of trainings to enhance competencies. Such trainings may include ACRE, VCU supported employment, and IPS. In implementing supported employment services, KRS funds individual job placements. KRS emphasizes the importance of geographic distribution of services. KRS also places a priority on working with community agencies that have the capacity to:

- Develop productive relationships with employers.
- Encourage people with disabilities to learn about developing natural support networks.

## **g. Coordination with Employers**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

### **1. VR services; and**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) emphasizes employer engagement activities that market the skills and abilities that qualified workers with disabilities have to contribute to the success of Kansas business and

industry. KRS will build and maintain its capacity for effective outreach and engagement with employers statewide in order to:

- Meet their workforce needs through the labor pool of qualified persons with disabilities.
- Identify competitive, integrated employment opportunities for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers, including such opportunities for youth and adults who are diverted from sub-minimum wage employment through Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Increase opportunities for youth with disabilities to engage in paid work-based learning experiences as part of the Pre-Employment Transition Services program. Such work-based learning is intended to facilitate career exploration and development of the soft skills necessary for lifelong employment success.
- Collaborate with partners in the workforce development system on coordinated business outreach processes.
- Coordinate with Economic and Employment Services in the Department for Children and Families, which administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and its employer development activities.

KRS has service provider agreements for job placement and on-the-job supports with nearly 120 local providers (community rehabilitation programs, local organizations and individual providers).

In 2013, the State Rehabilitation Council of Kansas established a committee to address employer outreach and engagement. The committee initiated the “Good for Business” campaign, which continues to be used on an ongoing basis. This campaign highlights how hiring people with disabilities will contribute to the success of Kansas businesses through:

- Workers qualified to meet business workforce needs.
- Workers who are safe, reliable and productive, and who tend to have lower turnover rates than other employees.
- Hiring incentives.
- Supports to business in areas such as recruiting and performance coaching.
- Innovative options such as no-risk no-cost job tryouts to help determine if there is a good employment match between a VR consumer and business.

Also in the campaign, VR consumers who are successfully employed in high-wage, high-demand, and career pathway jobs are highlighted.

Each year, KRS and its provider network make contact with hundreds of employers, with various levels of engagement.

Focus groups conducted by K-State on behalf of the WIOA core partners in 2019 identified the lack of employability or soft skills as a chief concern among employers. This supports information reported in 2017 by the Kansas State Department of Education: research conducted by Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Stanford Research Center concludes that 85% of job success comes from having well-developed soft skills and people skills.

## **2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

Collaboration with workforce development system Core Partners and local workforce operators will enhance services for VR consumers, transition youth, and youth participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services.,

Such collaboration will enhance the KRS employer engagement activities. All Partners are committed to vigorously representing the employment needs of individuals (including youth) with disabilities and other consumers with significant barriers to employment.

## **h. Interagency Cooperation**

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### **1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;**

#### **Interagency agreement**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) will work with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to establish an interagency agreement regarding roles and responsibilities pertaining to competitive, integrated employment for Kansans with disabilities. KDADS and KDHE share responsibilities for administration of the Medicaid program. KDADS oversees services for persons with intellectual disabilities and behavioral health disabilities.

The purpose of the agreement will be to create a common understanding of responsibilities, policies and procedures. It will address data sharing to better analyze how mutual consumers interact with the various services and supports available to them. Perhaps most importantly, the agreement will establish a collaborative framework for services that will improve competitive, integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities. A priority will be to address procedures for referring youth with disabilities to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services so they may explore options for competitive, integrated employment rather than being placed directly in sub-minimum wage employment after exit from school, consistent with Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. In addition, the agreement will address referral procedures for adults who are already employed in sub-minimum wage jobs so that VR may provide periodic information and career counseling related to competitive, integrated employment options.

#### **Ongoing communication and collaboration**

KRS is in frequent contact with other agencies related to competitive, integrated employment of Kansans with disabilities. Some examples include participation on the:

- Governor's Behavioral Health Planning Council and its vocational sub-committee.
- The Developmental Disabilities Council.
- The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns.
- The Employment First Commission.
- Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

KRS has agreements with Comprehensive Schools for the Blind in Colorado (Colorado Center for the Blind), Missouri (Alphapointe) and Minnesota (BLIND, Inc.) to provide access to the intensive level of training needed by some consumers. An agreement with the Helen Keller National Center has also been established. On an ongoing basis, KRS will seek additional agreements as needed to meet the needs of our consumers.

### **2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and**

KDADS oversees services for persons with developmental/intellectual disabilities. Please refer to Part 1 of this section for more information on collaborative efforts leading to competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

### **3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.**

KDADS oversees services for persons with developmental/intellectual disabilities. Please refer to Part 1 of this section for more information on collaborative efforts leading to competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

#### **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

##### **1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

###### **A. Qualified Personnel Needs.**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) mission is: Working in partnership with Kansans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independence and self-reliance. Qualified staff are an essential asset to the agency's ability to achieve this mission. Therefore, KRS has established a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to assure that staff are well-qualified, take part in ongoing training to maintain expertise in the field of vocational rehabilitation (VR), and are accountable through performance-based evaluations.

###### **Data system on personnel and personnel development**

KRS maintains a system for collecting and reviewing information about the personnel who carry out the VR program. The data includes the number of individuals currently employed, the number of positions vacant, the classifications of positions, and the educational qualifications of counselors. Sources for this data system include the state's personnel/payroll system, budget reports, and the KRS database on staff credentials.

July 2019, KRS employs 63 vocational rehabilitation counselors who deliver basic VR and supported employment services through local service centers. There are 15 vacancies. The starting salary for VR counselors is \$41,870.40.

The number of persons served in PY 2018 was 10,686. The average VR counselor active caseload as of June 30, 2019 was 99. In addition, KRS employs Program Specialists who work in concert with counselors to provide case management services. Only qualified VR counselors employed directly by KRS continue to determine eligibility and order of selection categories, approve Individual Plans for Employment, authorize expenditure of VR funds, and make decisions to close cases.

KRS also employs eight rehabilitation managers who have supervisory responsibilities in service centers and four program administrators who are responsible for directing the VR program in their assigned geographical regions. Other staff provide vocational assessment and rehabilitation teaching services. Positions in the general category of administrative assistants or clerical support are also included among VR staff. When clerical support functions are provided on a percentage basis through the DCF regional offices, the positions are funded through the cost allocation process rather than direct VR funding.

###### **Counselor qualifications**

KRS maintains a database about the educational qualifications/credentials of counselors. A total of 41 of the 63 counselors currently meet the requirements of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The 22 others are working to complete the additional course work.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

### **Number of personnel needed**

To help determine personnel needs, KRS analyzes workloads and caseload size. Each staff person's caseload is compared to the average caseload within the entire program. (Please refer to caseload numbers provided in the previous section.)

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) continues to experience significant recruitment and retention issues regarding VR Counselor positions. In recent State Fiscal Years, the average monthly number of filled counselor positions has ranged between only 60 and 66, and the agency experienced turnover ranging from 33% to 43%. The agency is continuously recruiting to fill about 12 vacant Counselor positions, which represent nearly 19% of the Counselor workforce. VR services carried out in DCF Service Centers statewide provide counseling, guidance, vocational assessment, job coaching, supported employment, physical/mental restoration, job-related training, assistive technology, and job placement. These services are critical to empowering Kansans with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment, increase their self-sufficiency, and reduce reliance on other public benefits.

Challenges in recruiting and retaining counselors with master's level degrees continues to be a significant factor impacting staffing levels. Finally, recruiting of qualified counselors who are also certified in American Sign Language is a long-term concern.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

*Note regarding the table below: Information is based on the number of personnel employed as of June 30, 2018. Projected vacancies over the next five years are based on a projected turnover rate of 37.5% per year for counselors/direct service staff and 8% per year for all other positions. Annual turnover is then multiplied by five to determine the projected vacancies that will occur over the next five years. This calculation simply projects the vacancies that will occur, and does not estimate the number of vacancies that will eventually be rehired or filled.*

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>Current Vacancies</b>	<b>Projected vacancies over next 5 years</b>
Administrative staff	25	2	10
Counselors	63	15	118
Staff supporting counselors	35	5.5	14

Administrative staff includes central office positions and four regional program administrators. It also includes eight rehabilitation managers, who directly supervisor counselors. Staff supporting counselors includes vocational evaluators, rehabilitation teachers, program specialists, drivers, and clerical support positions.

## **B. Personnel Development**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

### **Institutions of higher education preparing VR professionals**

Emporia State University (ESU) currently offers a master's degree in clinical counseling with concentration areas available in rehabilitation, mental health or addiction counseling. There are currently 13 students enrolled in the rehabilitation track and another 10 expected in 2020. ESU projects eight graduates in 2019 and four in 2020

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

### **Emporia State University Snapshot as of the November 2019**

- Students enrolled: 13, with 10 additional enrollments expected in 2020.
- Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 0
- Students sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 8
- Graduates in 2019: 8, with four additional graduates expected in 2020.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Emporia State had zero graduates in the masters in rehabilitation counselor program last year.

## **2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

### **Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel**

KRS strives to fill vacant positions with well-qualified and diverse individuals. Vacancy postings clearly state the educational requirements consistent with the national CRC educational standard, which was the requirement prior to WIOA. Recruiting individuals who already meet the qualification standards has been a challenge, and numerous new hires must complete additional educational requirements. A total of 22 of the 63 employed counselors, or 35%, require additional graduate level classes in order to meet the CSPD standards.

In addition to the traditional advertising methods, Regional Program Administrators and DCF Personnel Services have made personal contacts with universities that have master's programs in rehabilitation counseling, have provided information to candidates about the geographical regions where vacancies exist, and have recruited candidates through specialized programs, such as programs for people who are deaf or hard of hearing or programs teaching service delivery for people who are blind.

Vacancy announcements are distributed to independent living centers and colleges that are traditionally minority institutions in order to encourage cultural diversity in the KRS workforce. Recruitment also occurs through professional, advocacy and service provider associations, as well as recruiting sources such as Indeed.

The Personnel Services office has represented KRS at various opportunities, including career fairs. KRS also posts vacant position announcements through a recruiting system for rehabilitation counselors at [www.experience.com](http://www.experience.com); such announcements are then distributed to more than 200 schools both regionally and nationally. Job vacancy announcements are also distributed directly to a listing of 30 masters level programs and programs specializing in the rehabilitation of individuals who are blind.

The following factors also influence the ability of KRS to recruit and retain qualified staff:

- The starting salary for a Human Services Counselor classification is \$1,610.40 bi-weekly.
- The graduate training program for rehabilitation counselors at Emporia State University anticipates a limited number of graduates compared to the vacancies experienced by KRS.
- KRS has experienced difficulty recruiting candidates for counselor positions who already meet the CSPD requirements or who are willing to take the additional graduate-level classes necessary to meet the CRCC educational requirements as a condition of their employment.
- KRS has had difficulty recruiting to fill qualified VR counselor positions with fluency in American Sign Language and knowledge of the deaf culture.

### 3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

**A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

#### Personnel standards

Educational and experience requirements are intended to ensure that personnel have a 21st-century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

To address recruitment and retention issues, and ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals, KRS will pursue updates to its personnel standards as follows:

- Establish a Level I Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) I position to be hired with a bachelor's degree along with the requirement to complete the master's degree educational requirements within five years of the employment start date.
- Continue the ability to hire VRCs (at Level II) with Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) designation, master's or doctorate in Rehabilitation Counselor, or a master's or doctorate in a closely related field.
- Continue the ability to hire Program Specialist positions for case management. Unlike the VRC I and II levels, these positions may not perform the non-delegable functions of eligibility determination, approval of Individual Plans for Employment, authorization for case service expenditures, and decisions to close cases.

**VR Counselor I:** Determines eligibility and order of selection categories, approves Individual Plans for Employment, authorizes expenditure of VR funds, and makes decisions to close cases.

Minimum qualifications are as follows: A bachelor's degree in a field of study reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, indicating a level of competency and skill demonstrating basic preparation in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with consumers and employers. Experience working with people with disabilities and/or experience in competitive integrated business environments and/or human resources, supervision or training preferred.

Within 5 years of the employment start date, individuals in the VRC I positions must complete the master's level requirements (minimum of SEVEN graduate courses):

- Priority to complete: ONE integrated OR TWO separate graduate courses with the primary focus on Theories of Counseling AND Techniques of Counseling
- ONE on Foundations of Rehabilitation Counseling
- ONE on Assessment
- ONE on Occupational Information OR Job Placement
- Priority to complete (medical and psychosocial aspects): TWO with the individual or combined primary focus on 1) Medical Aspects of Disabilities; 2) Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities; AND 3) Multicultural Issues
- ONE on Case Management AND Rehabilitation Services

**VR Counselor II:** Determines eligibility and order of selection categories, approves Individual Plans for Employment, authorizes expenditure of VR funds, and makes decisions to close cases.

Standard 1: A current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor designation; or

Standard 2: A master's or doctorate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; or

Standard 3: A master's or doctorate in one of the following closely related fields, majors or disciplines plus the additional education requirements described below:

Behavioral Health

Behavioral Science

Business Administration

Clinical Social Work

Counseling

Counseling Psychology

Disability Studies

Education

Human Relations

Human Resources

Human Services

Law  
Management  
Marriage and Family Therapy  
Occupational Therapy  
Psychology  
Psychometrics  
Public Administration  
Rehabilitation Administration/Services  
Rehabilitation Psychology  
Social Work  
Special Education  
Vocational Assessment/Evaluation  
.

**Additional education requirements for Standard 3 for VRC II:** Candidates selected under Standard 3 will be required to complete additional graduate level courses within three years of their employment start date, as follows:

- One integrated or two separate courses in the Theories of Counseling and the Techniques of Counseling; and
- One integrated or two separate courses in the Medical Aspects of Disability and the Psychosocial Aspects of Disability.

Staff who must meet additional educational requirements will have professional development plans based on the following principles:

- Training is intended to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of rehabilitation counselors, thereby enhancing the provision of VR services and the quality of employment outcomes.
- Counselors may continue to perform all counselor functions during their training periods in accordance with KRS policies and procedures for “new counselors.”
- VR funds may be used to help staff maintain compliance with the standards through the support of continuing education requirements.
- KRS compliance with the standards will be reviewed annually, in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council.

**Program Specialist:** Works in concert with VR Counselors to provide case management services and to research information necessary for eligibility determination, order of selection categories, Individual Plans for Employment development, expenditure of VR funds, and case closures.

Minimum qualifications

In accordance with state classification specifications:

Five years of experience interviewing, investigating, compiling information, documenting decisions, interpreting guidelines and/or providing technical assistance relevant to the agency's programs. Post-secondary education may be substituted for experience as determined relevant by the agency.

Preferred qualifications:

A bachelor's degree in a field of study reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, indicating a level of competency and skill demonstrating basic preparation in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with consumers and employers.

Demonstrated paid or unpaid experience, for not less than one year, consisting of—

- o Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center;
- o Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individual with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or
- o Direct experience in competitive integrated employment environments as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources or recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities.

For hard-to-fill positions, KRS may use Title I funds for employment incentives, including but not limited to relocation expenses or student loan payback after a qualifying period of employment. Such incentives would be offered in exchange for the candidate's commitment to work in the position for a specified period of time.

State personnel standards require the following knowledge, abilities and skills at entry into Counselor positions:

- Knowledge of the principles and techniques of counseling.
- Knowledge of the physical and psychological aspects of disability and human behavior.
- Knowledge of individual appraisal instruments and their applications.
- Knowledge of job analysis, job modification and rehabilitation engineering.
- Knowledge of agency policy and procedures.
- Ability to relate to and work effectively with persons with diverse disabilities.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a variety of people.
- Ability to review and evaluate information and to adapt trends and developments in the field to a practical program application.
- Ability to analyze medical, psychological, economic, social and academic information to formulate recommendations.

- Ability to evaluate personal and psychological characteristics, physical abilities, work background, potential capabilities and interests of the disabled individual and to interpret these in terms of their occupational significance.
- Ability to develop individual written plans for employment.
- Ability to use reference materials on disability to guide eligibility decisions and rehabilitation plan development.
- Ability to use computer technology with accommodations as needed, to complete job duties.

**B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

KRS will work with DCF Personnel Services to incorporate the following WIOA priorities into the personnel standards:

Ensuring that personnel have a 21st-century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities means that personnel have specialized training and experience that enables them to work effectively with individuals with disabilities to assist them to achieve competitive integrated employment and with employers who hire such individuals. Relevant skills include, but are not limited to—

- (A) Understanding the medical and psychosocial aspects of various disabilities;
- (B) Assessing an individual’s skills and abilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment and establishing a plan to meet the individual’s career goals;
- (C) Counseling, case management, and advocacy to modify environmental and attitudinal barriers;
- (D) Understanding the effective utilization of rehabilitation technology;
- (E) Developing effective relationships with employers in the public and private sectors; and
- (F) Delivering job development and job placement services that respond to today’s labor market.

**4. Staff Development.**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

**A. System of staff development**

Describe a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

KRS will continue to develop, implement and maintain a professional development system for new and experienced staff. A priority focus area will be to address effective communication strategies to assure consumer engagement and progress toward employment, and development and implementation of effective Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs). Other areas of focus continue to be informed choice; understanding the purpose and intent of the VR program; linkages between eligibility, rehabilitation needs, consumer goals

and priorities, and services provided; development of effective progress measures; time and caseload management techniques; financial accountability cultural competence; accountable decision-making; expertise related to disability populations served (specifically persons who are blind or visually impaired, persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders, persons with mental illness, and persons with head injury); leadership development; use of comparable benefits; basic benefits counseling issues surrounding employment; use of Kansas specific labor market trends and demands; and, effective career counseling and guidance related to employment as the avenue to self-reliance.

KRS will conduct an annual training conference on the use of evidence-based and promising practices. KRS will also conduct an intensive initial training for new Pre-Employment Transition Services staff as well as new Counselors and Program Specialists.

KRS will seek technical assistance and opportunities to contract for the development of on-line training related to services for persons with mental illness, autism, dual sensory impairment, blindness/visual impairment, head injury and other specific populations as may be determined necessary.

Staff are evaluated annually using the process and forms prescribed by the DSA. Each staff member's position description is a primary source document for the evaluation system. The position description explains the staff member's duties and responsibilities related to the KRS mission, including the emphasis on serving people with the most significant disabilities.

The comprehensive Performance Management System, originally established in KRS in November 2009, has been updated to emphasize the core priorities of the program: competitive integrated employment outcome, quality employment as measured by average hourly wages, timely access to services, and excellence in case/caseload management and customer service.

## **B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge**

Describe procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Numerous strategies assure that information about research, best practices, trends, and state agency policies and procedures are distributed to staff statewide. KRS maintains both public and internal web sites which post information on agency policies and service provider agreements. KRS uses technology, such as statewide web casts with live audio and video, to conduct staff meetings and trainings.

## **5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

KRS provides a full range of special media options and accommodations. The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides support to staff and consumers statewide. Foreign language interpreting is provided as needed through use of DSA foreign language interpreting contracts. The KRS Handbook of Services, application for services, and informational brochures have been translated into Spanish and Vietnamese.

When accommodations cannot be provided by staff directly, services may be contracted through a private individual or organization, such as a sign language interpreter or foreign language interpreters. When appropriate, family members may assist with communication if that is the consumer's informed choice.

## **6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

A Memorandum of Understanding between KRS and the Kansas Department of Education addresses the intention to share staff training resources and to facilitate cross-informational training among special education and rehabilitation staff.

### **j. Statewide Assessment**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

#### **1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:**

##### **A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;**

#### **Executive Summary of Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Selected Attachments**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (RS) contracted with the Center for Learning Tree Institute (LTI) to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) related to the employment needs of Kansans with disabilities. The CSNA was conducted from August through November 2015.

The CSNA is a required component of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Combined State Plan to be submitted to the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Results of the CSNA are used to inform the priorities and strategies established in the VR services portion of the plan.

A CSNA is completed every three years to ensure plans are based on current relevant data. The needs assessment must include information on three populations: 1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities; 2. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who are unserved and underserved; and, 3. Individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce system.

For the first time, the 2015 CSNA includes a significant new requirement to assess the needs of youth with disabilities for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). The 2015 CSNA also addresses new WIOA Section 511 requirements designed to divert individuals from sub-minimum wage employment. This new requirement ensures that VR will work with individuals with a disability to secure competitive integrated employment as an alternative to them accepting placement in a sub-minimum wage job, such as one at a sheltered workshop. (The latter is not an allowable VR outcome and is not supported through VR services.)

The 2015 CSNA includes nine key elements for assessment and analysis:

1. Review of Kansas disability population and employment estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and comparison with the national average.
2. Review and analysis of Kansas disability demographics, caseload data, transition services, and employment.
3. Identification and analysis of trends in data for populations for special consideration.
4. Facilitation of key informant interviews.
5. Development and administration of surveys with consumers of VR services with open cases, closed successful cases, and closed unsuccessful cases.

6. Development and administration of surveys with providers of services to individuals with disabilities.
7. Development and administration of surveys with educators who work with individuals with disabilities.
8. Analysis of transcripts from archival and current stakeholder meetings.
9. Facilitation of a young adult and a parent/guardian focus group.

This section of the VR services portion of the State Plan provides a summary of the findings from this CSNA. Identified strengths

Several common themes emerged that are positive in terms of contribution to outcomes for identified populations or indicative of overall areas of strength, which included:

VR staff in DCF Service Centers received high marks in the consumer survey. This survey is based on the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) method. ASCI scores of 5 or more represent the perspective of “more satisfied than not.”

Overall, how satisfied are you with Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

- Open cases: 6.78
- Cases closed successfully: 7.67
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.70

To what degree did Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services meet your expectations?

- Open cases: 6.54
- Cases closed successfully: 7.41
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.68

Think of your ideal vocational program for people with disabilities. How do you think Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services compares with your ideal?

- Open cases: 6.78
- Cases closed successfully: 7.67
- Cases closed unsuccessfully: 4.7

Data showed that among successfully closed cases, 48.4% scored their overall satisfaction with VR services as a perfect 10. Among open cases, 29.6% scored their overall satisfaction as a 10. Among those closed unsuccessfully, 15% scored their satisfaction with VR services as a 10.

Based on findings from the key informant interviews and stakeholder feedback, strengths of the VR system were described as including a strong and comprehensive array of services as well as effectiveness in oversight, communication, and responsiveness. Additionally, overall satisfaction with VR services was communicated by respondents across multiple data sources used for this assessment, including individuals, providers, and key informants.

Multiple data sources included in the comprehensive assessment provided feedback that characterized VR staff and counselors as one of the greatest assets of the state VR service delivery system, describing them as caring, effective, supportive, willing to “go the extra mile,” and a vital aspect of individual success in the attainment of education or employment-related goals for VR consumers.

Many VR consumers reported positive relationships with their counselors. Individuals describing a supportive and positive relationship with their VR counselor or caseworker were also more likely to report attaining positive VR outcomes.

### **Identified service needs or issues**

Across the various data sources and assessment tools utilized for the development of this report, several common issues or conceptually linked themes emerged upon review and analysis. Highlights of these findings include:

An ongoing concern that was described in multiple sources of feedback, both currently and historically (via stakeholder meeting transcripts) is the availability of VR counselors and caseworkers, particularly as it relates to caseloads. The number of VR counselors has decreased over the past five years; however, it should be noted that there has been a correspondent decrease in the number of individuals served.

A number of VR consumers said there is a need for improved communication from the VR system. These consumers often felt as though they had been forgotten or fallen through the cracks. Consumers described waiting for weeks, months, and sometimes longer for counselors to return calls. These issues frequently seemed to be related to counselor turnover. Speed of services was a related theme among interview participants, citing the need for services to be provided at a faster rate in order to take advantage of the present health, capability, and motivation of consumers.

A common theme across responses and across assessment mechanisms was the issue of transportation. Concerns falling within this category were associated with concerns related to transportation availability, hours of operation, accessibility, affordability, safety, or proximity. These themes were consistent across environments but particularly in rural areas.

The importance of collaboration was another commonly occurring topic which included the need for sustained and enhanced cross-organizational and inter-agency coordination, networking, education, outreach, and partnership to ensure consumers receive a full array of available supports at the local level. This need for collaboration subsumed multiple areas, including the aforementioned issue of transportation, financial planning, living skills development, etc.

The need for marketing and public awareness of the supports available through Vocational Rehabilitation Services and how to access services was a frequent topic of concern. This includes marketing, promotion, education, and outreach to increase awareness among individuals, families, educators, business community members and employers, and among community agencies and organizations.

Provider survey respondents indicated that they frequently accessed services from KANSASWORKS on behalf of VR consumers. However they also estimated that the majority of VR consumers only engage directly with KANSASWORKS centers on a seldom or infrequent basis.

### **Overall issues relating to specific populations**

- Results of key informant surveys and stakeholder feedback analyses indicated that VR does an appropriate job of addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. In addition, the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities is 0.92, well above the federal minimum of 0.80.
- While the percentage of individuals in Kansas with a disability is on par with the estimated national average, it should be noted that ACS estimates for the American Indian/Alaska Native population in Kansas (15.6%) represents the largest percentage individuals with disabilities in the State, followed by

Black or African Americans (15.2%). This suggests the need for continued, intentional, and targeted outreach to these subpopulations.

- The percentage of individuals with deafness or other hearing impairments served in Kansas has remained stable from 2012 to 2015 at 5%. Those with hearing impairments as well as those with vision impairments were more likely than those with other disabilities to indicate the need for improved communication.
- Patterns of increased VR services for individuals with traumatic brain injury and autism/autism spectrum have been noted.

### **Overall issues relating to transition age youth**

- A consistently identified need was the importance of viewing transition and pre-employment services as being a cooperative endeavor between VR, schools, and community service providers. There is a need for better communication among partners and enhanced VR promotion and outreach. There is also the need for more frequent collaboration between VR and educators to empower youth to achieve employment.
- Consistent feedback across assessment data sources relating to pre-employment services for transition age youth indicated the need for early planning and introduction of transition resources for youth as well as their parents. (Suggestions include initiation of planning and supports as early as at or before entry into high school.) Pertaining to the entire disability service system, including but not limited to VR, the need to simplify processes and paperwork for families was also expressed, especially for those with low literacy or for whom English is not the primary spoken language.
- When looking at the overall K-12 student population, there has been a sharp increase in the special education population as well as in the number of students with Section 504 plans over the past five years. The increase in students will also impact the numbers needing transition services from VR over the course of the State Plan. (As a point of comparison, the VR system served a total of 11,419 consumers in FFY 2015.)

For the 2013-2014 school year, the Kansas State Department of Education reports the following number of students ages 14-21:

- Students with 504 plans ONLY: 4,934
- Students with Special Education plans ONLY: 19,383
- Total: 24,317

### **Overall issues relating to Section 511 of WIOA**

The new WIOA Section 511 provision is intended to ensure that individuals with disabilities, especially youth with disabilities, are afforded full opportunity to prepare for and obtain competitive integrated employment. Before youth with disabilities (defined as anyone who is age 14 through 24) can be hired in sub-minimum-wage employment, such as at a sheltered workshop, the individual must be afforded a meaningful opportunity to achieve competitive, integrated employment by accessing VR services. This provision supports the priority for competitive, integrated employment, but also has the potential to greatly expand the number of persons requiring VR services.

- Educators described the need for processes to be integrated through the Individual Education Plans for youth. Educators also reported that additional communication and support with and from VR is needed, as well as additional training, marketing, and outreach for schools, families, and youth.

- The need for consistent counselors dedicated to work exclusively with transition-age youth with disabilities was also described as an essential component.

More detailed information is provided in the following Attachments. Attachment A: Consumer satisfaction survey Attachment B: Key informant interviews Attachment C: Provider survey Attachment D: Educator survey Attachment E: Stakeholder meeting analysis details. Attachment F: Focus group results

### **Attachment A: Consumer satisfaction survey details**

The survey was distributed In September to all consumers with open cases, consumers whose cases closed successfully in the previous six months, and consumers whose cases closed unsuccessfully in the previous six months. The survey was based in part on the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which measures three dimensions of satisfaction: overall satisfaction, satisfaction compared to expectations, and satisfaction compared to the ideal. This method was recommended by the Rehabilitation Services Administration following a national study by the Research Triangle Institute and adopted by the State Rehabilitation Council of Kansas.

At the time the survey closed in order to tabulate results, there was a 12.7% response rate. In addition to the ACSI and “perfect 10” scores reported earlier in this Section, here are the results on other questions posed using the survey:

- 88.8% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed that VR staff are respectful to them.
- 74.9% agreed or strongly agreed that their counselor encourages them to reach their employment goals.
- 70.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they have a better chance of becoming employed because of VR services.
- 67.3% agreed or strongly agreed that their counselor responded within one day to requests for information or assistance. (One day is the KRS customer service standard.)

### **Attachment B: Key informant interview details**

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to uncover issues, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions related to the implementation and maintenance of VR services.

The majority of interview participants believed VR currently offers strong and comprehensive services, but bureaucracy sometimes frustrate consumers. Participants believed consumer expectations for themselves and their services were low, and a concerted effort is required to improve those expectations.

Universally, interview participants believed an adequate job of addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds is provided by VR services. Some participants felt more could be done to address groups like deaf/hard of hearing and blind/low vision individuals, but felt the needs of cultural and ethnic minorities in Kansas were well met. Rural Kansans were identified by the majority of respondents as an underserved population.

The quality of employment counselors and contracted service providers were highlighted by interview participants as strengths of the present VR service delivery system. The majority of participants felt VR cares about providing quality services to its consumers.

Interview participants were concerned about the rate of counselor turnover, identifying knowledge of services, case management, and consumer comfort-level as important aspects that suffer. Although high turnover was highlighted as a concern, participants did not provide suggestions to address this concern. Speed of services was a theme among interview participants, citing services need to be provided at a faster rate in order to take advantage of the present health and motivation of consumers, while also reducing frustration for consumers and families.

Participants viewed the KANSASWORKS network as a resource that could be an excellent partner in service delivery; however, the majority of participants felt individuals with disabilities often underutilized the KANSASWORKS network. Several participants believed additional outreach to special populations, emphasis on front door services (i.e. easily accessible information), education for consumers using the KANSASWORKS network, as well as education for KANSASWORKS network providers in working with individuals with disabilities were all needed.

Emphasis on lowering frustration and more thorough case management were suggestions made by participants. The inclusion of more add-on services to better fit the individual needs of consumers and better relationships and communication with employers was suggested by multiple respondents. Participants cited more transparency was needed through better communication between service providers, working towards a common vocabulary, adopting a “full pay-for-performance model” and grading system for providers, and celebrating successes.

All participants felt pre-employment services were of the utmost importance for addressing the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. Interview participants believed pre-employment services should be provided “as early as possible.” Participants agreed pre-employment services should be thorough, including on-the-job-training for specific occupations, generalized work-related and life skills (e.g., financial planning, cleaning skills, step-by-step practice), and soft skills (e.g., cooperation, timeliness, hygiene). Interview participants viewed pre-employment services as a cooperation between service providers and schools and believed better communication with schools, strengthened, and more comprehensive school-transitions programs are pertinent to the success of pre-employment services. Participants were concerned about pre-employment needs for rural Kansans in particular.

Encouraging participants to hold high expectations, more comprehensive case management, and helping establish thorough pre-employment services, were highlighted by the findings of the key informant interview as the best strategies to encourage success for VR consumers. Transportation, additional support for rural Kansans, implementation of a grading system for service providers, easy access to outcomes data of providers, utilization of technology, and virtual office space were all identified as possible solutions and were each cited repeatedly by interview participants. Education for consumers using the KANSASWORKS network, as well as education for KANSASWORKS network providers in working with individuals with disabilities were all needed.

**Attachment C: Provider survey details** Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with their interaction with VR staff. The majority of responses fell within the range of 8-9 on a 10-point scale, representing 19 participants. The average score for this indicator was 6.8, with 1 being the lowest score (with a frequency of two) and 10 being the highest score (with a frequency of six). Service providers indicated their highest level of satisfaction with their interaction with VR staff.

To determine the typical frequency of interaction taking place between providers and VR staff, survey respondents were asked to rate how often they engaged in communication with VR once a VR consumer had been accepted for services by provider organizations. The most commonly reported level of regularity of communication by participants was weekly, followed by monthly levels of communication and interaction. A total of 43 of 49 total survey respondents indicated they interacted with VR staff on at least a weekly, monthly, or twice a month basis. Only six respondents reported communicating with VR staff with a less than monthly frequency.

Additionally, providers were asked to estimate what percent of their respective program or company income was derived from work with Kansas VR consumers. The greatest number of respondents (23 respondents-46.9%) indicated that less than 25% of their revenue is derived from work with VR consumers, while 30.6% (15 respondents) indicated that 75-100% of their revenue was associated with work with VR consumers. A total of

30 of 49 survey participants indicated that VR Services-related revenue represented 50% or less of their organization's revenue-generating activities.

In keeping with federal requirements to assess the traditional workforce system, three survey items were designed to garner feedback related to Kansas workforce center services and engagement. These items included:

To what extent do you access services from KANSASWORKS (workforce centers or one-stop workforce centers) with or on behalf of VR consumers? (This question pertains to provider staff accessing services on behalf of their consumers.)

- 34.7% of participants indicated they accessed workforce services on a frequent basis. An additional 30.6% of providers described doing so on an occasional basis.

Thinking about your VR consumers who also receive services from KANSASWORKS, which of the following best describes their level of interaction?

- Consumers are guided by me as a VR service provider: 63.3%
- Consumers receive guidance from staff at the workforce center: 14.3%
- NA or no comment: 8.2%
- Consumers work independently at the workforce center: 6.1%
- Consumers attend workshops: 4.1%
- Other: 2.0%
- Varies based on consumer needs: 2.0%

How frequently do you think your consumers interact with KANSASWORKS? (This question pertains to consumers accessing services directly.)

- 42.9% estimated that consumer interaction with KANSASWORKS took place on a "seldom" basis, or an "occasional" basis (34.7%).

#### **Attachment D: Educator survey details**

While the majority of educators reported they were aware of how to refer students to VR, a smaller percentage were very confident in their awareness of the services VR can offer and 25.5% reported they were not aware of when to refer a student to VR.

I am aware of how to refer a student to VR.

- Strongly agree: 51.1%
- Agree: 36.2%
- Disagree: 12.8%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

I am aware of when to refer a student to VR.

- Strongly agree: 48.9%
- Agree: 25.5%
- Disagree: 25.5%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

I am aware of the services that VR can offer.

- Strongly agree: 25.5%
- Agree: 57.4%
- Disagree: 17.0%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

Educators indicated overwhelmingly (91.5%) that their students were interested in post-secondary education (53.2% strongly agree and 38.3% agree) and that students intend to become employed as adults (97.9% with 66.0% strongly agree and 31.9% agree).

Two questions asked educators to rank a number of methods for most effective learning and educating. The first question asked about the most effective method for educators to learn about VR services and how they can assist students with disabilities. The method ranked most effective (1) by the majority of educators (47%) was “one-on-one contact from a VR counselor.” The method ranked most effective (1) by 32% of educators was “VR personnel participation in IEP meetings.” The response options were ranked as follows:

#### Rank of Effective Methods for Educators to Learn About VR Services

1. One-on-one contact from a VR counselor
2. Brochures and informational materials
3. In-service training at my school
4. Informational fair outside of regular school hours
5. VR personnel participation in IEP meetings
6. Other: Coordinate with my counselor or special education coop staff; webinars; recorded training videos

The second question asked about the most effective method to educate parents/guardians and family members about VR services to help youth with disabilities with post-secondary education and employment.

#### Rank of Effective Methods to Educate Family Members about VR Services

1. VR personnel participation in IEP meetings
2. One-on-one contact from a VR counselor
3. Informational meetings for families, such as a parent night focused on VR services
4. Brochures and informational materials
5. Informational fair (with VR and other service organizations) outside of regular school hours
6. Other: Meeting with student and/or parents one-on-one at a time set up at the school during the school day. They used to do this and it was VERY helpful.

#### Best Ways for VR to Participate in IEP Meetings

- Meeting attendance 27.3%
- Use of technology (Skype, conference call, etc.) 23.6%
- Enhanced communication 14.5%
- Collaboration with schools 14.5%
- Additional/consistent staff 12.7%
- Additional training 7.3%

Given the limited number of VR staff, educators were asked at what age it would be when it would be most important for VR to participate in IEP meetings. The majority of educators indicated ages 17 (46.8%) and 16 (27.7%) would be the most important ages for VR to participate in IEP meetings.

The following question was posed: “To assist your students to be successful in post-secondary education or direct entry into the workforce, which of the following pre-employment transition services are most important?”

#### Rank of Most Important Pre-Employment Transition Services

1. Work-based learning experiences
2. Workplace readiness training
3. Instruction in self-advocacy
4. Job exploration counseling
5. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary education programs at institutions of higher education

Additional questions were write-in questions. Responses were categorized for each question according to themes and are reported below.

Please describe your suggestions for how the VR program can most effectively participate in the provision of pre-employment transition services as described in the questions above.

#### How VR Can Most Effectively Participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services:

- Collaboration with schools 19.2%
- Job skill training 17.3%
- Additional services before graduation 11.0%
- Consistent staffing 7.7%
- Provide additional information about available programs 7.7%
- Additional services after graduation 5.8%
- Enhanced communication 5.8%
- More funding 5.8%
- Additional counseling services 3.8%
- Availability of staff 3.8%
- Earlier intervention 3.8%
- Online resources 3.8%
- Assistance with scheduling 1.9%
- Provide networking opportunities 1.9%

Describe the biggest obstacles that your students with disabilities face as they transition from school to post-secondary education, the adult world of work and/or independent living.

#### Biggest Obstacles with Transition

- Lack of work skills 29.3%
- Family or other support 22.4%
- Lack of job opportunities 10.3%
- Lack of services 10.3%
- Fear 5.2%
- Lack of funding 5.2%
- Rural location 5.2%

- Transportation 5.2%
- Inconsistent VR staff 3.4%
- Job applications 1.7%
- Language barriers 1.7%

Describe the biggest obstacles that your students with disabilities face in terms of becoming employed in real jobs in their communities (competitive, integrated employment).

#### Biggest Obstacles with Employment

- Lack of job skills 22.6%
- No opportunities 22.6%
- Employer cooperation 13.2%
- Agency support 11.3%
- Transportation 11.3%
- Self-advocacy skills 9.4%
- Family support 5.7%
- Rural location 3.8%

#### **Attachment E: Stakeholder meeting analysis details**

To further explore areas of strength and organizational assets, in addition to the identification of challenges, issues, and needs encountered by Kansas VR, a series of content analyses were completed using archival transcripts from 33 community-level stakeholder feedback sessions conducted through 2006-2012. The archival analyses yielded a total of 1,207 coded thematic responses and a summary of key elements derived from the overall analysis are provided in the following sections.

Each community-level stakeholder meeting was designed to invite and solicit feedback relating to several areas essential to effective VR processes and service provision; notably, attendees were invited to share their experiences and comments relating to topics including:

1. Positive experiences and successes as the result of VR services.
2. Areas for improvement in VR interaction or service delivery.
3. Collaborative opportunities with other providers for aligned outcomes.
4. Supports and resources needed for youth transitioning from high school.

Due to the facilitated nature of the sessions, participant feedback was invited for each of these four general areas and as a result, they are represented in the top five most frequently occurring codes.

Based on frequency of occurrence, the following table details the top ten topics or issues that emerged from the archival analyses of the community meeting proceedings.

#### Top 10 thematic codes by frequency 2006 to 2012

1. Success stories
2. Issues, challenges, complaints
3. Student transition coordination
4. Disparate populations (potentially underserved populations)
5. Collaboration
6. Transportation and mileage
7. Business community/employer awareness

8. Need for VR marketing and awareness campaign
9. Consumer engagement
10. Accommodations

#### Top 10 thematic codes by frequency 2015

1. Transition age students
2. Collaboration
3. Barriers
4. Disparate populations (potentially underserved populations)
5. General inquiries
6. VR successes and compliments
7. Need for VR marketing and awareness campaign
8. Needs and issues
9. Quality assurance
10. Consumer engagement

#### **Attachment F: Focus group results**

##### Results of parent/guardian focus group (8 participants)

1. When you think about your child's future, what goals do you have? (Probe: What are your dreams for them?)

There was a consistent theme among all respondents that they desired for their child to be employed.

2. If your child is in high school now (or thinking about when they were in high school), what services would help them prepare for more education, such as college or technical school, or employment?

A common theme on this question was the need for job skills coaching and a strong transition plan with goals.

3. Whether your child is planning to get more education or go directly into employment, what skills do you think they will need to make a successful transition from high school to the adult world of work and independent living?

Most respondents discussed the need for individualized care and customization of plans based on need and a huge desire for more training around autism for all involved in this process.

4. What are your thoughts about your child having a job and earning their own income?

Every respondent considered this a goal for their child.

5. What supports do you think your child will need to be able to reach their employment goals? What will be the biggest obstacles they will face in trying to achieve that goal?

Both a common need and obstacle was vendors/employers who are trained and supported in employing those with disabilities. Barriers depended somewhat upon the disability. But most expressed the barrier of having enough vendors with appropriate training and support as the biggest obstacle.

6. Who would you like to have on your team to help support your child in reaching their goals?

The responses varied depending on the disability. But the most common were: the consumer/youth, case workers, VR, job coach, and autism specialists.

7. Has your child had any work experience, such as a summer job or after-school job? Four of the seven had some job experience.

8. Have you had any experience with VR yet? (Applied for services, been determined eligible, received services?)

Three responded yes.

9. For those of you with experience with VR—what did you think about your experience with VR? What do you like? What would you change to make it better?

All three had positive experiences with VR. A common suggestion was for VR to better support their workforce through pay and lower caseloads, which would lead to more successful placements. Also, focus more on long-term placement versus just getting a placement made

Results of young adult focus group (4 participants)

Respondents offered a range of goals and jobs they desired to achieve. These goal areas and employment sectors included:

1. Working with dogs and in a doggy day care.
2. Becoming a veterinary technician engaged in veterinary medicine and a desire to attend college to achieve these goals.
3. Enhanced opportunities to be around friends, family and a goal of being in a supportive environment that provided direct care.
4. Find meaningful employment in a lab setting accompanied with a college degree.

Respondents all reinforced their desire to have a job and have the ability to earn their own income. Seventy-five percent of the respondents desired to progress to a point where they were not reliant on their family for care or financial assistance.

System challenges and barriers to supportive environments were themes that emerged in the focus group. Respondents discussed a range of experiences they felt impeded the supports they had in place. Others offered examples of much needed supports. Examples of barriers to supports included:

1. Being bullied.
2. Financial issues.
3. Access to supportive school environments.
4. Lack of support to attend college.

Examples of supports needed to be successful included:

1. Access to community services, personal technical assistants.
2. Access to occupational, physical and speech therapies.
3. Access to programs or services that would have identified employers who would have been a good fit the first time around.
4. Ability to have one-on-one contact and mentorship from a manager or boss.

Physical and language barriers emerged as a prominent theme in the focus group. Respondents discussed frustrations and difficulties they had in trying to achieve their personal and employment goals. Several stated they could not get employers to call them back. Others reinforced physical and non-verbal barriers as the primary reason they were unable to achieve their goal of employment. Several respondents stated it would have been helpful to have customized assistance tailored to their unique disabilities. Participants also stated

reservations about being in public alone due to safety issues. Fifty percent of the respondents stated they would like the opportunity to access services that offered service dogs as personal safety assistance buddies.

Respondents reported a number of negative experiences with high school services in which they felt stereotyped, disrespected, or dismissed by those providing services and by fellow students. Many respondents reported similar experiences in broader society and especially in high school and employment settings. In addition to reports of feeling stereotyped and disrespected, respondents discussed a range of experiences in which they felt the services needed to be customized.

Examples of programs that could prepare young adults included:

1. Access to offline and online job search tools and resources.
2. One-on-one classes offering individual education and vocational rehabilitation training.
3. Access to daily physical, occupational and speech therapy.
4. Services to assist with custom needs, attention disorders and transition to college.

Respondents reported a number of negative experiences in acquiring work experience that was a good fit for their disability. Fifty percent of the respondents stated they worked after school or during the summer. Fifty percent stated they had not been able to land a job.

Twenty-five percent of respondents had experience with VR assistance with job placement. The remainder seventy-five percent had not received assistance from VR in a job placement program or situation.

Seventy-five percent reported not receiving assistance from VR yet. However, they did state they are in need of more resources and are learning about the services offered by VR and are interested in applying in the future. Twenty-five percent of respondents stated they would like to see customizable services offered by VR tailored to individual disabilities.

### **Summary of the needs of individuals with significant disabilities including their needs for supported employment services**

Annually about 10% of the total persons served (Status 02-24 +32) receive supported employment services. Individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, significant intellectual disabilities, and traumatic brain injury are among the primary populations receiving supported employment services. Their services are characterized by:

- The need for community-based work assessments or job tryouts in competitive, integrated employment so that individuals who have not previously worked can explore jobs that are a good match for their skills and interests.
- The importance of an individualized approach in connecting these individuals with: available social service and disability-related services; transportation; benefits counseling; and natural support networks in their home communities.
- The need for employability or soft skill training on issues such as self-advocacy, communications, taking direction from employers, getting along with co-workers and customer service.
- The need for specific job skill training matched with current and projected labor market needs.

When considering the entire disability service delivery system, identifying the source of extended supports continues to be an issue warranting further review and capacity building efforts, especially for individuals who cannot access such services through the state's network of community mental health centers and community developmental disability organizations.

## **B. who are minorities;**

Minorities have a unique set of needs in addition to those experienced by other people with disabilities. Many minority persons with disabilities face discrimination on the basis of both minority status and disability. The the service rate for individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds compared to non-minority individuals with disabilities has been above the federal standard of .80 since 2021. FFY 2013: 0.84

Results of key informant surveys and stakeholder feedback analyses indicated that VR does an appropriate job of addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

While the percentage of individuals in Kansas with a disability is on par with the estimated national average, it should be noted that ACS estimates for the American Indian/Alaska Native population in Kansas (15.6%) represents the largest percentage individuals with disabilities in the State, followed by Black or African Americans (15.2%). This suggests the need for continued, intentional, and targeted outreach to these subpopulations.

## **C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

The percentage of individuals with deafness or other hearing impairments served in Kansas has remained stable from 2012 to 2015 at 5%. Those with hearing impairments as well as those with vision impairments were more likely than those with other disabilities to indicate the need for improved communication. Patterns of increased VR services for individuals with traumatic brain injury and autism/autism spectrum have been noted.

An analysis of KRS stakeholder meetings over multiple years suggested that stakeholders perceive the following groups to be underserved: those with low or limited literacy or English-language proficiency, those with prior history of legal involvement or incarceration, those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, persons in rural/frontier areas, active duty or returned military, children in foster care or alternative placements, —as well as those experiencing issues with visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility or physical limitations, traumatic brain injury, developmental or intellectual disabilities, and mental illness.

As it pertains to service needs identified in stakeholder meetings for underserved populations, it was noted for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, ASL rather than English is the native language and therefore assessments, paperwork, and even job applications are often difficult to complete due to comprehension issues or time restrictions. For persons who are blind or visually impaired, the need for assistive technology and access to computers and the Internet was of paramount importance. For multiple issues, including vision, hearing, or other disabilities, the need for appropriate assistive technology, VR caseworker understanding of issues, and need for access and availability of services was emphasized.

## **D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**

From Key Informant Interviews, the following assessment was recorded:

Participants viewed the KANSASWORKS network as a resource that could be an excellent partner in service delivery; however, the majority of participants felt individuals with disabilities often underutilized the KANSASWORKS network. Several participants believed additional outreach to special populations, emphasis on front door services (i.e. easily accessible information), education for consumers using the KANSASWORKS network, as well as education for KANSASWORKS network providers in working with individuals with disabilities were all needed.

From service provider surveys, the following assessment was recorded:

In keeping with federal requirements to assess the traditional workforce system, three survey items were designed to garner feedback related to Kansas workforce center services and engagement. These items included:

To what extent do you access services from KANSASWORKS (workforce centers or one-stop workforce centers) with or on behalf of VR consumers? (This question pertains to provider staff accessing services on behalf of their consumers.)

- 34.7% of participants indicated they accessed workforce services on a frequent basis. An additional 30.6% of providers described doing so on an occasional basis.

Thinking about your VR consumers who also receive services from KANSASWORKS, which of the following best describes their level of interaction?

- Consumers are guided by me as a VR service provider: 63.3%
- Consumers receive guidance from staff at the workforce center: 14.3%
- NA or no comment: 8.2%
- Consumers work independently at the workforce center: 6.1%
- Consumers attend workshops: 4.1%
- Other: 2.0%
- Varies based on consumer needs: 2.0%

How frequently do you think your consumers interact with KANSASWORKS? (This question pertains to consumers accessing services directly.)

- 42.9% estimated that consumer interaction with KANSASWORKS took place on a “seldom” basis, or an “occasional” basis (34.7%).

**E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**

A consistently identified need was the importance of viewing transition and pre-employment services as being a cooperative endeavor between VR, schools, and community service providers. There is a need for better communication among partners and enhanced VR promotion and outreach. There is also the need for more frequent collaboration between VR and educators to empower youth to achieve employment.

Consistent feedback across assessment data sources relating to pre-employment services for transition age youth indicated the need for early planning and introduction of transition resources for youth as well as their parents. (Suggestions include initiation of planning and supports as early as at or before entry into high school.) Pertaining to the entire disability service system, including but not limited to VR, the need to simplify processes and paperwork for families was also expressed, especially for those with low literacy or for whom English is not the primary spoken language.

When looking at the overall K-12 student population, there has been a sharp increase in the special education population as well as in the number of students with Section 504 plans over the past five years. The increase in students will also impact the numbers needing transition services from VR over the course of the State Plan. (As a point of comparison, the VR system served a total of 11,419 consumers in FFY 2015.)

For the 2013-2014 school year, the Kansas State Department of Education reports the following number of students ages 14-21:

- Students with 504 plans ONLY: 4,934
- Students with Special Education plans ONLY: 19,383
- Total: 24,317

Educator surveys provided the following detailed assessment:

While the majority of educators reported they were aware of how to refer students to VR, a smaller percentage were very confident in their awareness of the services VR can offer and 25.5% reported they were not aware of when to refer a student to VR.

I am aware of how to refer a student to VR.

- Strongly agree: 51.1%
- Agree: 36.2%
- Disagree: 12.8%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

I am aware of when to refer a student to VR.

- Strongly agree: 48.9%
- Agree: 25.5%
- Disagree: 25.5%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

I am aware of the services that VR can offer.

- Strongly agree: 25.5%
- Agree: 57.4%
- Disagree: 17.0%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

Educators indicated overwhelmingly (91.5%) that their students were interested in post-secondary education (53.2% strongly agree and 38.3% agree) and that students intend to become employed as adults (97.9% with 66.0% strongly agree and 31.9% agree).

Two questions asked educators to rank a number of methods for most effective learning and educating. The first question asked about the most effective method for educators to learn about VR services and how they can assist students with disabilities. The method ranked most effective (1) by the majority of educators (47%) was “one-on-one contact from a VR counselor.” The method ranked most effective (1) by 32% of educators was “VR personnel participation in IEP meetings.” The response options were ranked as follows:

Rank of Effective Methods for Educators to Learn About VR Services

1. One-on-one contact from a VR counselor
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3. In-service training at my school
4. Informational fair outside of regular school hours
5. VR personnel participation in IEP meetings
6. Other: Coordinate with my counselor or special education coop staff; webinars; recorded training videos

The second question asked about the most effective method to educate parents/guardians and family members about VR services to help youth with disabilities with post-secondary education and employment.

Rank of Effective Methods to Educate Family Members about VR Services

1. VR personnel participation in IEP meetings
2. One-on-one contact from a VR counselor
3. Informational meetings for families, such as a parent night focused on VR services
4. Brochures and informational materials
5. Informational fair (with VR and other service organizations) outside of regular school hours
6. Other: Meeting with student and/or parents one-on-one at a time set up at the school during the school day. They used to do this and it was VERY helpful.

#### Best Ways for VR to Participate in IEP Meetings

- Meeting attendance 27.3%
- Use of technology (Skype, conference call, etc.) 23.6%
- Enhanced communication 14.5%
- Collaboration with schools 14.5%
- Additional/consistent staff 12.7%
- Additional training 7.3%

Given the limited number of VR staff, educators were asked at what age it would be when it would be most important for VR to participate in IEP meetings. The majority of educators indicated ages 17 (46.8%) and 16 (27.7%) would be the most important ages for VR to participate in IEP meetings.

The following question was posed: “To assist your students to be successful in post-secondary education or direct entry into the workforce, which of the following pre-employment transition services are most important?”

#### Rank of Most Important Pre-Employment Transition Services

1. Work-based learning experiences
2. Workplace readiness training
3. Instruction in self-advocacy
4. Job exploration counseling
5. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary education programs at institutions of higher education

Additional questions were write-in questions. Responses were categorized for each question according to themes and are reported below.

Please describe your suggestions for how the VR program can most effectively participate in the provision of pre-employment transition services as described in the questions above.

#### How VR Can Most Effectively Participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services:

- Collaboration with schools 19.2%
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Describe the biggest obstacles that your students with disabilities face as they transition from school to post-secondary education, the adult world of work and/or independent living.

#### Biggest Obstacles with Transition

- Lack of work skills 29.3%
- Family or other support 22.4%
- Lack of job opportunities 10.3%
- Lack of services 10.3%
- Fear 5.2%
- Lack of funding 5.2%
- Rural location 5.2%
- Transportation 5.2%
- Inconsistent VR staff 3.4%
- Job applications 1.7%
- Language barriers 1.7%

Describe the biggest obstacles that your students with disabilities face in terms of becoming employed in real jobs in their communities (competitive, integrated employment).

#### Biggest Obstacles with Employment

- Lack of job skills 22.6%
- No opportunities 22.6%
- Employer cooperation 13.2%
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- Family support 5.7%
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#### **Results of parent/guardian focus group (8 participants)**

1. When you think about your child's future, what goals do you have? (Probe: What are your dreams for them?)

There was a consistent theme among all respondents that they desired for their child to be employed.

2. If your child is in high school now (or thinking about when they were in high school), what services would help them prepare for more education, such as college or technical school, or employment?

A common theme on this question was the need for job skills coaching and a strong transition plan with goals.

3. Whether your child is planning to get more education or go directly into employment, what skills do you think they will need to make a successful transition from high school to the adult world of work and independent living?

Most respondents discussed the need for individualized care and customization of plans based on need and a huge desire for more training around autism for all involved in this process.

4. What are your thoughts about your child having a job and earning their own income?

Every respondent considered this a goal for their child.

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Both a common need and obstacle was vendors/employers who are trained and supported in employing those with disabilities. Barriers depended somewhat upon the disability. But most expressed the barrier of having enough vendors with appropriate training and support as the biggest obstacle.

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The responses varied depending on the disability. But the most common were: the consumer/youth, case workers, VR, job coach, and autism specialists.

7. Has your child had any work experience, such as a summer job or after-school job?

Four of the seven had some job experience.

8. Have you had any experience with VR yet? (Applied for services, been determined eligible, received services?)

Three responded yes.

9. For those of you with experience with VR—what did you think about your experience with VR? What do you like? What would you change to make it better?

All three had positive experiences with VR. A common suggestion was for VR to better support their workforce through pay and lower caseloads, which would lead to more successful placements. Also, focus more on long-term placement versus just getting a placement made

### **Results of young adult focus group (4 participants)**

Respondents offered a range of goals and jobs they desired to achieve. These goal areas and employment sectors included:

1. Working with dogs and in a doggy day care.
2. Becoming a veterinary technician engaged in veterinary medicine and a desire to attend college to achieve these goals.
3. Enhanced opportunities to be around friends, family and a goal of being in a supportive environment that provided direct care.
4. Find meaningful employment in a lab setting accompanied with a college degree.

Respondents all reinforced their desire to have a job and have the ability to earn their own income. Seventy-five percent of the respondents desired to progress to a point where they were not reliant on their family for care or financial assistance.

System challenges and barriers to supportive environments were themes that emerged in the focus group. Respondents discussed a range of experiences they felt impeded the supports they had in place. Others offered examples of much needed supports. Examples of barriers to supports included:

1. Being bullied.
2. Financial issues.
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Examples of supports needed to be successful included:

1. Access to community services, personal technical assistants.
2. Access to occupational, physical and speech therapies.
3. Access to programs or services that would have identified employers who would have been a good fit the first time around.
4. Ability to have one-on-one contact and mentorship from a manager or boss.

Physical and language barriers emerged as a prominent theme in the focus group. Respondents discussed frustrations and difficulties they had in trying to achieve their personal and employment goals. Several stated they could not get employers to call them back. Others reinforced physical and non-verbal barriers as the primary reason they were unable to achieve their goal of employment. Several respondents stated it would have been helpful to have customized assistance tailored to their unique disabilities. Participants also stated reservations about being in public alone due to safety issues. Fifty percent of the respondents stated they would like the opportunity to access services that offered service dogs as personal safety assistance buddies.

Respondents reported a number of negative experiences with high school services in which they felt stereotyped, disrespected, or dismissed by those providing services and by fellow students. Many respondents reported similar experiences in broader society and especially in high school and employment settings. In addition to reports of feeling stereotyped and disrespected, respondents discussed a range of experiences in which they felt the services needed to be customized.

Examples of programs that could prepare young adults included:

1. Access to offline and online job search tools and resources.
2. One-on-one classes offering individual education and vocational rehabilitation training.
3. Access to daily physical, occupational and speech therapy.
4. Services to assist with custom needs, attention disorders and transition to college.

Respondents reported a number of negative experiences in acquiring work experience that was a good fit for their disability. Fifty percent of the respondents stated they worked after school or during the summer. Fifty percent stated they had not been able to land a job.

Twenty-five percent of respondents had experience with VR assistance with job placement. The remainder seventy-five percent had not received assistance from VR in a job placement program or situation.

Seventy-five percent reported not receiving assistance from VR yet. However, they did state they are in need of more resources and are learning about the services offered by VR and are interested in applying in the future. Twenty-five percent of respondents stated they would like to see customizable services offered by VR tailored to individual disabilities.

## **2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and**

When assessing the need for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs, KRS will be guided by whether services (individual programs as well as statewide systems) meet the following objectives:

- Involve persons with disabilities and the community in making best use of current resources according to local needs.
- Improve coordination of services.
- Demonstrate outcomes and accountability.
- Advocate for community inclusion.
- Contribute to the growth of quality transition planning services.
- Aid in the development of supported employment programs by maintaining quality standards.
- Increase outreach programs to meet the needs of individuals in underserved areas or for minorities.
- Create new service delivery strategies for unserved or underserved disability populations.
- Increase opportunities for competitive, integrated employment.

The needs assessment revealed the need for job placement and other provider services with specialized expertise in competitive, integrated employment of people with disabilities. As a result, KRS will emphasize the development and maintenance of evidence-based and promising practices through the End-Dependence Kansas initiative. Direct service contracts will be used to promote the development and expansion of Individual Placement and Supports, Individualized Discovery/Customized Employment, and Progressive Employment.

Generally, there is also a need for additional supported employment and job coaching services. KRS will update its provider agreements for these services.

### **3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .**

In key informant interviews, all participants felt pre-employment services were of the utmost importance for addressing the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. Interview participants believed pre-employment services should be provided “as early as possible.” Participants agreed pre-employment services should be thorough, including on-the-job-training for specific occupations, generalized work-related and life skills (e.g., financial planning, cleaning skills, step-by-step practice), and soft skills (e.g., cooperation, timeliness, hygiene). Interview participants viewed pre-employment services as a cooperation between service providers and schools and believed better communication with schools, strengthened, and more comprehensive school-transitions programs are pertinent to the success of pre-employment services. Participants were concerned about pre-employment needs for rural Kansans in particular.

Pertaining to coordination with transition services provided through IDEA, special education staff were surveyed to select the age groups for whom their school currently provides the PETS service. Educators were instructed to select one or more age groups as appropriate.

Percentage of Schools Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services Provided by Age

Services	Age 14-16	Age 16-17	Age 19-21	Other	Not Currently Providing
Job exploration counseling.	<b>83.0%</b>	80.9%	55.3%	4.3%	2.1%
Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible	66.0%	<b>80.9%</b>	61.7%	4.3%	8.5%
Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.	59.6%	<b>78.7%</b>	53.2%	2.1%	4.3%
Workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills.	<b>70.2%</b>	66.0%	55.3%	2.1%	14.9%
Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).	63.8%	<b>66.0%</b>	46.8%	4.3%	21.3%

Educators were also asked how VR could most effectively participate in PETS, with the following responses:

Code	Frequency	Percent
Collaboration with schools	10	19.2%
Job skill training	9	17.3%
Additional services before graduation	6	11.0%
Consistent staffing	4	7.7%
Provide additional information about available programs	4	7.7%
Additional services after graduation	3	5.8%
Enhanced communication	3	5.8%
More funding	3	5.8%
Additional counseling services	2	3.8%
Availability of staff	2	3.8%
Earlier intervention	2	3.8%
Online resources	2	3.8%
Assistance with scheduling	1	1.9%

Code	Frequency	Percent
Provide networking opportunities	1	1.9%

The educator survey also provided the following information: Rank of most important PETS services from the educator’s perspective.

Response options:	Rank Order of Effectiveness
Work-based learning experiences (as described above)	1
Workplace readiness training	2
Instruction in self-advocacy (as described above)	3
Job exploration counseling	4
Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education	5

## k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

### 1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

According to the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics, there are 191,769 civilians ages 18-64 with disabilities living in the community, and 46.4% are employed. 81% of their non-disabled peers are employed, resulting in an employment gap of 34.6%. (*Source: 2018 Disability Statistics Compendium*)

At any given time, about 11,000 youth ages 16 to 21 are receiving special education services through an Individual Education Plan. This number excludes students in the gifted program and students with Section 504 accommodation plans.

### 2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

#### A. The VR Program;

For FFY 2020, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) projects that services will be provided for 11,0008561-225 individuals. KRS monitors caseload and expenditure trends regularly. The KRS projection method tracks consumers and costs by status as they move through the system. Using historical data and known future events, consumer movement and the related costs are projected. This information is updated each month, allowing assumptions about movement and/or costs to be adjusted through a review of actual vs. anticipated activity. The following table identifies the number of eligible individuals projected to receive services with funds provided through Title I Vocational Rehabilitation and Title VI Supported Employment. Persons are identified by Order of Selection priority category.

Please note that Title VI supported employment funds may be expended only for individuals with the most significant disabilities (Category 1). In addition, because of the limited amount of Title VI funds provided, KRS will also expend Title 1 funds in order to meet consumer needs for supported employment services. In the table below, the Title VI funds are divided by the average cost for a supported employment case from all funding sources in order to provide the estimated number of persons to be served with Title VI funds.

The average annual cost of services for FFY 2019 is projected. Projections are subject to change based on budget appropriations and allocations.

This information does not include projections for Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- Category 1: 8,296 (Includes persons in Category 1 receiving Title VI funding)
- Category 2: 2,479
- Category 3: 225

**B. The Supported Employment Program; and**

KRS projects that 225 individuals will be served with funds through the Title VI Supported Employment program. All individuals are in Order of Selection Category 1 (individuals with the most significant disabilities).

In addition, because of the limited amount of Title VI funds provided, KRS will also expend Title 1 funds in order to meet consumer needs for supported employment services.

(the Title VI funds are divided by the average cost for a supported employment case from all funding sources in order to provide the estimated number of persons to be served with Title VI funds.)

**C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;**

- Category 1: 8,296 (includes persons receiving Title I and/or Title VI funded services)
- Category 2: 2,479
- Category 3: 225

**3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and**

None. There are currently no waiting lists for services in Kansas.

**4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.**

The average annual cost of services for FFY 2019 is projected. Projections are subject to change based on budget appropriations and allocations.

Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Category 1 - Title I	\$9,578,179	8336	\$1,149

Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Category 1 - Title VI	\$197,138	225	\$875
Category 2 - Title I	\$3,011,985	2479	\$1,215
Category 3 - Title I	\$280,125	225	\$1,245
Totals	\$13,067,427	11265	

## I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

### 1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

VR goals, strategies and indicators are based on:

- Results of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, which included extensive opportunities for consumers, service providers, school personnel, stakeholders and advocacy groups to provide input.
- An analysis of the agency’s performance on federal standards and indicators.
- Monitoring and agency performance reviews or audits.
- Consultation with the designated state agency and workforce development partners,.
- Work sessions with the State Rehabilitation Council on development of goals and priorities.

### 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

#### Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS)

**Mission:** Working in partnership with Kansans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independence and self-reliance.

**KRS Goals and Priorities:** As the State’s Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, KRS will:

- Collaborate with the Core Partners under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to achieve the performance accountability requirements of the Kansas workforce development system.
- Establish an ambitious strategic direction for the VR program, as described below, emphasizing employment outcomes for Kansans with disabilities, empowerment, collaboration, innovation and accountability.

#### VR Principles

The following core principles will be infused into all VR operations:

- Competitive, integrated employment is a key component to reaching self-reliance, independence, inclusion, economic equality, and integration into society for people with disabilities.

- All people with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are presumed to be capable of engaging in gainful employment.
- KRS, its consumers, providers and partners will be accountable for the achievement of employment and the effective use of resources.
- KRS expects and encourages meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, public/private partners, employers and other stakeholders in KRS programs, services and activities.
- KRS promotes the use of evidence-based practices in VR service delivery to empower Kansans with disabilities to maximize employment and economic self-reliance.
- KRS emphasizes employer engagement activities that market the skills and abilities of qualified workers with disabilities have to contribute to the success of Kansas business and industry.

## **VR Goals, Strategies and Indicators**

Baseline indicators listed below are based on WIOA Program Year (PY) 2018 (July 2018 through June 2019). The KRS goal throughout the period of this plan is to show continuous improvement.

### **Empowerment —**

- **Increase the quality and quantity of employment outcomes for Kansans with disabilities.**
  - **Emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.**
1. Number of persons achieving stable competitive integrated employment.  
PY 2018: 1,201
  2. Average hourly earnings of persons employed.  
PY 2018: \$10.91
  3. Percent of persons employed who report their own earnings as their primary source of support.  
PY 2018: 75.7%
  4. Timely access to services: 60% of consumers have access to services within 45 days of signed application. (compared to federal timeframes of 150 days).  
PY 2018: 24%
  5. Number of students with disabilities participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences. (unduplicated count of students with disabilities with a Pre-ETS plan during the year)  
PY 2018: 1,455
  6. Percent of students receiving Pre-ETS services who are also in foster care.  
PY 2018: 10%
  7. Number of youth with disabilities who achieve competitive, integrated employment.  
PY 2018: 273

To support these employment-focused outcome measures for all consumers with disabilities, KRS will implement the following strategies:

- Implement plan to improve recruitment and retention of VR counselors, and thereby improve capacity, timeliness and quality of services.
- Update the Career Counseling, Information and Referral process with a stronger focus on empowering individuals earning subminimum wage to achieve competitive integrated employment. Coordinate with KDADS on CMS final rule on integrated settings and its impact on persons working at subminimum wage in sheltered workshops.
- Identify and implement options to streamline equipment purchases for VR clients, thereby improving the quality and timeliness of services.

KRS will also implement the following strategies to empower youth and students with disabilities to achieve their goals for direct entry into employment and/or post-secondary education.

- Build partnerships with school transition personnel to encourage career-focused and work-based experiences to be incorporated into transition Individual Education Plans and to increase referrals of students with disabilities to the VR program.
- Increase the number of targeted outreach activities with students, parents, and school personnel in order to foster a cultural shift that emphasizes employment expectations for students with disabilities.
- Collaborate with employers, centers for independent living, and workforce development system partners to increase opportunities for youth with disabilities to participate in paid work-based learning experiences, explore career options, and develop the soft skills necessary for lifelong employment success.

#### **Collaboration —**

- **Partner with service providers, grantees, contractors, MCOs, and other state agencies to increase the quality and quantity of VR employment outcomes.**

To support collaboration, KRS will implement the following strategies:

- Evaluate/maintain provider and contractor agreements that deliver quality services and outcomes.
- Establish/maintain provider rates that allow our partners to be successful. Established enhanced rate, and related training/certification requirements for supported/customized employment job coaching.
- Establish ongoing service provider quarterly regional meetings.
- Build and maintain the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core partnerships.
  - Explore a co-location pilot with workforce centers.
  - Finalize MOUS and IFAs with Local Areas.
- Coordinate outreach efforts with KDADS for individuals impacted by new protected income levels and CMS final rules on integrated settings to encourage VR as an avenue to employment. Secure necessary benefits counseling.
- Explore options and analyze capacity to issue a competitive RFP to fund collaborative and innovative approaches with community partners to increase access to services and employment outcomes.

#### **Accountability —**

To assure accountability, KRS will implement the following strategies:

- Establish capacity to report on WIOA common performance accountability measures. Participate in the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) process.
- Continue emphasis on collecting Social Security Reimbursement funds used for grants to Centers for Independent Living. Secure Ticket Tracker software to assist in identifying Social Security Reimbursement eligible cases.
- Establish annual training conference to assure that regional staff have learning opportunities about best practices, policy and fiscal accountability.
- Update the case review and performance management processes to focus on outcomes, timely access to services and effectiveness in case/caseload management and customer service.

### **Innovation —**

To foster innovation, KRS will implement the following strategies:

- Modernize the Kansas Management Information System, a 30-year old legacy system for case management, fiscal processing and data reporting. Coordinate with IT to hire a business analyst and project manager.
- Engage an evaluation entity to conduct a process review of the KRS service delivery structure, and to make recommendations regarding best and promising practices, efficiencies, improvements, innovations, and partnerships.
- Investigate options for virtual consumer meetings.
- Replicate successful evidence-based practices implemented through the End-Dependence Kansas initiative.
- Implement a Comprehensive Planning Initiative for the Pre-ETS and Transition Services provided by KRS and its key partners for students and youth with disabilities.

### **WIOA Common Performance Accountability Measures**

Indicator information is pending as of the date of this report. Employment rate and wage data is impacted by the lag in reporting time.

- A. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter is PY 2018: TBD
- A. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.  
PY 2018: TBD
- B. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.  
PY 2018: TBD
- C. Credential Attainment: The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program.  
PY 2018: TBD

D. Measurable skill gains: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment.  
PY 2018: TBD

- E. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (currently being piloted by federal partners before being finalized):
- Approach #1 — Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers. PY 2018 data is listed below.
    - i. Workforce Centers and Wegner Peysler: 65.8%
    - ii. Adult Education: 48%
    - iii. Vocational Rehabilitation (KRS): 62%
  - Approach #2 – Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time. PY 2018 data is listed below.
    - i. Workforce Centers and Wegner Peysler: 25%
    - ii. Adult Education: NA
    - iii. Vocational Rehabilitation (KRS): 23%

### **3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:**

The goals and priorities were developed with consideration given to the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, statewide stakeholder meetings, and consultation with the designated state agency and workforce development partners. They were developed in joint planning sessions with the State Rehabilitation Council.

#### **A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;**

The goals and priorities were developed with consideration given to the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, statewide stakeholder meetings, and consultation with the designated state agency and workforce development partners. They were developed in joint planning sessions with the State Rehabilitation Council.

#### **B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and**

KRS awaits further federal guidance on the establishment of baselines and goals for the VR program for the WIOA common performance accountability measures.

#### **C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.**

Recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council were included in the development of the goals and priorities. There were no current Section 107 monitoring activities.

### **m. Order of Selection**

Describe:

#### **1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:**

##### **A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**

**Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) projects that all categories in Order of Selection will remain open with no waiting list during the remainder of PY 2017 and throughout PY 2018.**

KRS categories are defined as follows:

Category 1: Eligible individuals with a most significant physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome, and whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time. In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals in Category 1, a waiting list based upon the date of application will be activated.

Category 2: Eligible individuals with a significant physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation. In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals in Category 2, a waiting list based upon the date of application will be activated.

Category 3: All other eligible individuals. In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals in Category 3, a waiting list based upon the date of application will be activated. For purposes of these category definitions:

- Multiple services means more than one service as listed on the IPE. Support services (maintenance, transportation, personal assistance, and services to family members) may not be counted toward multiple services. Routine counseling and guidance to facilitate participation in the VR process may not be counted toward multiple services. Core services which are not provided by KRS but which are necessary for achievement of the employment outcome may be counted toward multiple services.
- Extended period of time means at least four months between Status 12 and closure.

## **B. The justification for the order.**

Several factors will be considered in periodically determining whether KRS has sufficient funds to serve all eligible persons who apply. These factors include:

- Availability of state general funds to match available federal VR funds
- Application, referral and caseload trends
- Adequacy of staff coverage
- Costs of purchased services, such as diagnostics, medical, restoration and training
- Estimated costs of continuing services under existing IPEs
- Emphasis on serving persons with the most significant disabilities
- Timeliness of determination of eligibility and provision of services
- Outreach efforts
- Unserved or underserved groups

Determinations will be made prior to the beginning of each fiscal year and whenever a change in circumstances warrants. Consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council is an important component of such a determination.

### C. The service and outcome goals.

Based on the analysis of factors listed above:

- KRS previously implemented waiting lists for Categories 2 and 3 effective July 1, 1999 through March 8, 2001, impacting the number of persons receiving planned services during that time and subsequent years.
- KRS closed all categories on October 4, 2002. Periodically, individuals were taken off the Category 1 waiting list according to their date of application. Effective February 17, 2003, the waiting list for Category 1 was discontinued. Waiting periods for individuals in Categories 2 and 3 were lifted April 1, 2004.
- There was no waiting list for services during SFY 2005.
- A waiting list for all Categories was implemented effective October 16, 2005. On January 6, 2006 KRS began periodically removing individuals in Category 1 from the waiting list. As of June 30, 2006, a total of 3,244 individuals had been released from the Category 1 waiting list. In July and August 2007, an additional 758 individuals were removed from the Category 1 waiting list and it has remained open since that time. At the same time, 658 individuals were removed from the Category 2 waiting list, and a waiting list for new individuals in Category 2 was reinstated. Categories 2 and 3 were re-opened in January, 2008 and remain open.

KRS monitors caseload and expenditure trends routinely to determine whether it will be necessary to implement Order of Selection. KRS projects that all categories will continue to be open for services during FFY 2020. Projections are subject to change based on the analysis (justification) factors identified in this Attachment and funding appropriations.

*Notes related to information below: Projections use FFY 2018 and 2019 as the baseline. Status 26 outcomes are successful rehabilitation closures (persons employed). Status 28 outcomes are closures which did not result in employment following the receipt of VR services. Time within which goals are to be achieved is based on Status 26 outcomes. Cost of services is the average cost for the lifetime of the case. All projections are subject to change based on budget appropriations and allocations.*

The following information represents projections for FFY 2019.

#### Priority Category 1

- Number of individuals to be served: 8561
- Outcome goals - Status 26: 917
- Outcome goals - Status 28: 910
- Time within goals are to be achieved: 952 days
- Cost of services: \$6,799

#### Priority Category 2

- Number of individuals to be served: 2,479
- Outcome goals - Status 26: 248
- Outcome goals - Status 28: 400
- Time within goals are to be achieved: 857 days
- Cost of services: \$5,850

#### Priority Category 3

- Number of individuals to be served: 225
- Outcome goals - Status 26: 35
- Outcome goals - Status 28: 90
- Time within goals are to be achieved: 744 days
- Cost of services: \$4,287

Total:

- Number of individuals to be served: 11265
- Outcome goals - Status 26: 1,200
- Outcome goals - Status 28: 1,400

**D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**

KRS monitors caseload and expenditure trends routinely to determine whether it will be necessary to implement Order of Selection. KRS projects that all categories will continue to be open throughout FFY 2020. Projections are subject to change based on the analysis (justification) factors identified in this Attachment and funding appropriations.

*Notes related to Table below: Projections use FFY 2018 and 2019 YTD as the baseline. Status 26 outcomes are successful rehabilitation closures (persons employed). Status 28 outcomes are closures which did not result in employment following the receipt of VR services. Time within which goals are to be achieved is based on Status 26 outcomes. Cost of services is the average cost for the lifetime of the case. All projections are subject to change based on budget appropriations and allocations.*

The following information represents projections for FFY 2020.

Priority Category 1

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- Outcome goals - Status 28: 400
- Time within goals are to be achieved: 857 days
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Priority Category 3

- Number of individuals to be served: 225
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- Cost of services: \$4,287

Total:

- Number of individuals to be served: 11265
- Outcome goals - Status 26: 1,200
- Outcome goals - Status 28: 1,400

### **E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

An order of selection gives priority to persons with the most significant disabilities when there are insufficient resources to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals who apply. After eligibility has been determined, each consumer is assigned to a category group. The consumer will be assigned to the highest priority category for which he or she is qualified, and a rationale will be documented in the case file. If the consumer's circumstances change or new information is acquired, the category designation can be changed.

Depending on available resources, all categories may be served. However, if there is a need to close one or more categories for services:

- Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) will set aside sufficient funds to purchase services necessary to determine eligibility. Applications for services will be accepted without restriction.
- The closure will not affect individuals who already have final Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs). IPE services will continue.
- Persons who need post employment services will not be affected.

### **2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.**

KRS will exempt eligible individuals from Order of Selection if they need specific services or equipment in order to maintain employment. The status of employment must be verified by the Counselor. Services provided must be specified on an Individual Plan for Employment. Only those services necessary to maintain employment may be provided through this exemption, not services the individual may need for other purposes.

### **n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.**

#### **1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) anticipates the availability of about \$300,000 in Title VI supported employment (SE) funds annually assuming there are no changes in the federal appropriation. In addition, KRS projects that Title I funds will also be spent annually in accordance with consumer needs for SE services. Such funds are expended through counselor payment authorizations which support specific services identified in the Individual Plans for Employment of consumers with the most significant disabilities.

Service provider agreements for customized SE services identify the following key components or milestones.

1. Creation of a job development action plan
2. Placement

### 3. Stabilization

4. 45 days of continuous, successful employment

5. Finalization of an extended ongoing service plan

6. Successful VR case closure in accordance with all of the requirements set out in federal regulations.

Individualized job coaching is paid by hourly contact and may also be provided through separate service provider agreements.

### **Goals and priorities**

KRS has established the following goals and indicators related to SE services in Kansas.

#### **Goal 1: Individual job placements in competitive, integrated employment will meet the vocational goals and priorities of persons served.**

KRS will track the following measures of success.

Indicator 1.1: Number of persons served with SE plans (Title I and/or Title VI).

Indicator 1.2: Number of persons rehabilitated after receiving SE services through any funding sources (Title I and/or Title VI).

#### **Goal 2: An effective network of service providers will offer quality, cost effective services resulting in measurable competitive, integrated employment outcomes.**

KRS will track the following measures of success.

Indicator 2.1: Geographic distribution of services will be maintained as reflected by an annual analysis of the percentage of counties with service provider coverage.

Indicator 2.2: 80% of persons referred to service providers will obtain jobs within an average of 120 days.

*Tracking of this measure will require Information Technology (IT) solutions.*

Indicator 2.3: 60% of persons referred will achieve successful employment outcomes.

*Tracking of this measure will require Information Technology (IT) solutions.*

## **2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:**

### **A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and**

#### **Funds reserved for youth with the most significant disabilities**

KRS will reserve and expend 50% of its Title VI funding to provide SE services to eligible youth with the most significant disabilities in order to assist them in achieving employment. The reserve percentage will be applied to the total amount allotted to Kansas through each SE Grant Award Notification, thus assuring that this requirement is met in light of potential federal reallocations and/or continuing resolutions. KRS will provide 10% match from State General Funds for this reserved funding. In the event KS uses more than 50% of its SE federal funds to provide services to youth, there is no requirement that KRS provide non-federal matching funds for the expenditures in excess of 50%. KRS does not anticipate using SE funds for administrative costs. These provisions do not apply to Title I funds used to support SE services.

To assure financial accountability, tracking will occur through the fiscal office in the Department for Children and Families, the designated state agency. To assure necessary data collection, tracking will also occur through the Kansas Management Information System, which is the caseload and fiscal information technology system for KRS.

Youth with a disability means an individual who is 14 to 24 years old.

**B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

**Expansion of supported employment**

KRS will implement the End-Dependence Kansas initiative, a significant capacity building and systems change effort to expand supported employment opportunities, especially through the Individual Placements and Supports model for persons with behavioral health disabilities and through the Individualized Discovery/SE model for persons with intellectual disabilities.

KRS will also:

- Recruit additional service providers to expand access to supported employment services statewide.
- Continue ongoing collaborative meetings with sources of long-term support, including HCBS waiver services and managed care organizations.
- Enhance data collection related to referral sources, consumers served by multiple agencies and programs, extended services and outcomes.
- Create a service provider agreement to expand the availability of highly qualified benefits counselors so that consumers have accurate information about employment incentives.

**o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

**1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has established the following major goals:

1. Kansans with disabilities will achieve quality, competitive, integrated employment.
2. KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.

**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, customized employment, Pre-Employment Transition Services and assistive technology services.

Innovation and expansion activities are consistent with the findings of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

## **2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.**

### **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. Through this provider agreement process, individual consumers are referred for services such as assessment, functional analysis, and 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.

## **3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

### **Outreach procedures**

Within available staff resources, 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. Following up on the needs assessment which identified the need for greater distribution of information about VR, KRS will prioritize development of outreach strategies and support materials.

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 Vocational Sub-Committee of the Governor's Behavioral Health Planning Council.
- The Assistive Technology Advisory Committee.
- The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Employment First Oversight Commission

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.

VR counselors and Pre-ETS transition specialists 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.

**4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

**Services for transition-aged youth with disabilities**

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

- KRS established 25 positions to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services statewide. Provider agreements are in place with the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, workforce centers and some centers for independent living to assist in the provision of Pre-ETS services.
- All regions conduct 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.
- KRS provides \$160,050 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.

**5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

**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. The End-Dependence Kansas project will provide an opportunity for CRPs to build their capacity to implement evidenced based employment services and supports to Kansans with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

**6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**

Baseline data has not yet been established regarding the WIOA common performance accountability measures.

However, in addition to the specific action described earlier in this part, in 2010 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, address number of rehabilitations and the average wage of persons rehabilitated.

Quarterly 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.

## **7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**

### **Workforce development system**

The KRS Director, administration staff and field management have a high level of involvement with workforce development system partners. The Director serves on the KANSASWORKS State Board and the boards of all five local workforce development areas. The Director and administrative staff serve on the WIOA State Plan Management Team. Along with regional VR staff, they also participated on work groups to develop operational strategies for the Combined Portion of the State Plan. Regional staff continue to participate on local committees, 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. Current memorandums of understanding (MOUs) address issues such as referral procedures and itinerant staffing at one-stops. MOUs will be updated in accordance with the provisions in the Combined Portion of this Plan.

KRS will work with Core Partners to track and analyze performance on the common performance accountability measures required under WIOA. Final federal information collection requirements and regulations are pending at the time of this plan submission.

As a core partner, VR will be aligned with the workforce system through:

- Representation on the local boards.
- Interoperable data systems.
- Collaborative case management and co-enrollment when needed by the consumer.
  - Co-enrollment occurs when consumers are actively participating in services from more than one system partner. Partners will make referrals to initiate co-enrollment if/when the consumer could benefit from the services of another partner program, if the consumer agrees, and/or if the consumer so requests. Referrals will be made on an individual consumer-by-consumer basis, and not as a blanket referral throughout the workforce system.
- Collaboration with other core partners on targeted outreach activities.
- Enhanced consumer referrals among core partners.
- Participation in evaluation and continuous improvement strategies.
- Specific strategies to strengthen communications among core partners.
- Collaboration among core partners for business outreach activities.

## **8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:**

### **A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**

Section L describes this information in detail.

### **B. support innovation and expansion activities; and**

### **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 consumer 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 also provides administrative support and direct expenses totaling about \$20,000 annually for operation of the State Rehabilitation Council. This funding arrangement is consistent with 34 CFR 361.35.

### **Services for unserved or underserved populations**

Current activities include the following:

- Cooperative working relationships between the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services oversight units for community developmental disability organizations and community mental health centers address capacity to provide supported employment services.
- KRS and DCF Economic and Employment Services continue to collaborate to serve recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) who have disabilities.
- KRS and DCF Prevention and Protection Services will coordinate to address the employment and/or post-secondary education needs of youth with disabilities who are aging out of foster care.
- 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, persons with disabilities who have a criminal background, 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.

### **Competitive, integrated employment for people with the most significant 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 the most significant disabilities, KRS has implemented the End-Dependence Kansas initiative.

End-Dependence Kansas will serve all disabilities, with a targeted effort for:

- Youth with disabilities transitioning from high school to employment
- Individuals interested in employment as an alternative to Social Security or other benefit programs
- Persons with disabilities exiting Kansas correctional facilities
- Persons with limited or no work experience
- Persons being served or pursuing services through Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waivers.

The evidence-based and promising practices selected for this initiative are:

- Individual Placement and Support
- Individualized Discovery/Customized Employment
- Progressive Employment

A significant goal of End-Dependence Kansas is to promote sustainable systems change to improve the quality and quantity of employment outcomes. End-Dependence Kansas will emphasize and support community partners to prioritize competitive, integrated jobs in the community rather than sheltered employment, non-work day activities or other more segregated services.

To implement this initiative, RS has performance-based contracts with 13 community partners to provide direct consumer services. To evaluate success of the initiative and to assist in establishing a sustainable cost structure, participating community partners will also be required to report specific progress measures and cost information. They must also participate in fidelity reviews.

### **Cooperative agreements**

As described in Section O, KRS will establish interagency agreements with the state agencies responsible for Medicaid, behavioral health and intellectual disability services. KRS will also establish memoranda of understanding with the local workforce development boards.

### **C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.**

Please refer to specific strategies for each goal in Section L.

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicated that VR does an appropriate job of addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds. In addition, the service ratio for individuals with disabilities who are minorities is 0.92, well above the federal minimum of 0.80.

The percentage of individuals in Kansas with a disability is on par with the estimated national average. Estimates for the American Indian/Alaska Native population in Kansas (15.6%) represent the largest percentage of individuals with disabilities in the State. This is followed by Black or African Americans (15.2%). This information suggests the need for continued, intentional, and targeted outreach to these subpopulations to ensure that service needs related to VR are met.

In Key Informant Interviews, rural Kansans were identified by the majority of respondents as an underserved population.

### **p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

Describe:

#### **1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

##### **A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

#### **Highlights and accomplishments**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) reports the following accomplishments in implementing the State Plan Goals and Priorities. These highlights are based on PY 2018 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019) indicators.

- A total of 1,201 Kansans with disabilities achieved stable employment as a result of VR services, earning an average of \$10.91 an hour. VR consumers achieved employment in high-wage, high-demand jobs, for example: more than \$37 an hour as a CAD drafter and numerous placements of more than \$30 an hour in the nursing field.

- The percent of individuals who reported their own earnings as the largest source of support at the time of vocational rehabilitation (VR) case closure was 75.7%. This represents a significant milestone toward increased self-reliance.

### **Performance related to federal indicators**

The following information is based on KRS analysis of data for PY 2018.

- Indicator 1.1 (number of rehabilitations). 1,201
- Indicator 1.2 (rehabilitation rate). 48%
- Indicator 1.3 (competitive employment). 100%
- Indicator 1.4 (outcomes for persons with significant disabilities). 96.2%
- Indicator 1.5 (average hourly wage). \$10.99 or a ratio of .48 of the average hourly wage of all employed Kansans.
- Indicator 1.6 (self-support). 75.7%.

### **Timeliness Standards**

- Federal regulations require that eligibility for VR services be determined no later than 60 days from the date of application, unless the applicant agrees to a time extension. The statewide average in Kansas is only 29 days (as of 6-30-19).
- Federal regulations require that an Individual Plan for Employment be developed no later than 90 days from the date of eligibility, unless the client agrees to a time extension. The statewide average in Kansas from application to IPE development is only 49 days (as of 6-30-19).

### **Update on indicators related to State Plan goals and priorities**

The following information provides a detailed update on the performance indicators related to the State Plan Goals and Priorities. Performance updates are for Program Year 2018 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2017), the most recent complete program fiscal year at the time of this State Plan submission. Indicators address a wide scope of performance measures identified by KRS and stakeholders during a collaborative planning process.

#### **Goal 1: Kansans with disabilities will achieve quality employment and self-sufficiency.**

Indicator 1.1: The number of persons achieving employment.

PY 2018: 1,201

Indicator 1.2: The percentage of individuals rehabilitated who achieve competitive employment.

PY 2018: 100%

Indicator 1.3: The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive employment as a ratio to the average hourly earnings for all employed Kansans.

PY 2018: \$10.99.

Indicator 1.4: Of the individuals who achieve competitive employment, the percent who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at closure.

PY 18: 75.7%

Indicator 1.5: The average number of hours worked per week by persons rehabilitated.

PY 2018: 29

Indicator 1.6: The percent of employment outcomes in technical, managerial and professional occupations. PY 2018: 13%

Indicator 1.7: The number of KRS SSI recipients and SSDI beneficiaries for whom KRS receives reimbursement funding. To meet this standard, the individuals must achieve the Substantial Gainful Activity earnings level for at least nine months.

PY 2018: 18

Indicator 1.8: The amount of Social Security reimbursement dollars paid to the agency for SSI recipients and SSDI beneficiaries who achieve the Substantial Gainful Activity earnings level for at least nine months.

PY 2018: \$748,528

Indicator 1.9: The percent of persons rehabilitated in full-time competitive employment who are covered by health insurance through employment.

PY 2018: 46.3%

Indicator 1.10: The number of successful employment outcomes achieved by consumers after participating in post-secondary education.

PY 2018: 134

Indicator 1.11: The number of persons referred from the Department of Corrections who achieve employment outcomes through VR. Based on consumer self-report of correctional involvement.

PY 2018: 42

**Goal 2: KRS, its providers and partners will be accountable for the achievement of employment and the effective use of resources.**

Indicator 2.1: Rehabilitation rate.

PY 2018: 48%

Indicator 2.2: Percent for whom eligibility is determined in 60 days or less from application unless the consumer agrees to an extension.

PY 2018: 97%

Indicator 2.3: Percent of accurate presumptive eligibility decisions for persons eligible for SSI or SSDI, based on case review results.

PY 2018: 81%

Indicator 2.4: Percent for whom IPEs are developed within 120 days or less from eligibility unless the consumer agrees to an extension.

PY 2018: 93%

Indicator 2.5: Obsolete

Indicator 2.6: Obsolete

FFY 2015: Obsolete

Indicator 2.7: Average expended per rehabilitation for the life of the case. PY 2018: \$6,554

Indicator 2.8: Annual number of persons served (status 02-24 +32). PY 2018: 10,686

Indicator 2.9: Annual contribution to IPE costs through comparable benefits and services. A data source has not been established for this indicator.

Indicator 2.10: Annual contribution to IPE costs through comparable benefits and services provided through one-stop workforce centers. A data source has not been established for this indicator.

Indicator 2.11: Rehabilitation rate of persons referred to placement or supported employment providers.

PY 2018: 58%

Indicator 2.12: The average wage achieved by persons referred to placement or supported employment providers.

PY 2018: \$10.01

Indicator 2.13: Obsolete

Indicator 2.14: Percent of case review results for which there is evidence that the consumer had the opportunity to exercise informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process.

PY 2018: 83%

Indicator 2.15: Percent of case review results for which there is evidence that the service provider was given clear information about the consumer's employment goals and expectations.

PY 2018: 94%

Indicator 2.16: Percent of case review results for which referral to a job placement or supported employment service provider was appropriate based on the individual needs of the consumer.

PY 2018: 97%

Indicator 2.17: Percent of case review results for which there was evidence of counseling and guidance related to maximizing employment and high-wage, career-track employment options.

PY 2018: 72%

Indicator 2.18: Percent of cases reviewed for which correct use of service codes was demonstrated.

PY 2018: 100%

Indicator 2.19: Percent of cases reviewed for which adherence to procurement policies and procedures was demonstrated.

PY 2018: 92%

Indicator 2.20: Obsolete

Indicator 2.21: Obsolete

Indicator 2.22: Percent of Regional Program Administrators and Unit Rehabilitation Managers who meet expectations related to fiscal management through the evaluation process.

Evaluation Year ending 2019: 100%

Indicator 2.23: Percent of counselors who meet or exceed expectations for the fiscal management competency in the performance evaluation system).

Evaluation Year ending 2019: 97%

**Goal 3: KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.**

(These indicators are based on the individual being age 24 or younger at the time of the case action referenced.)

Indicator 3.1: Number of new applications from transition youth. PY 2018: 1,192  
Indicator 3.2: Number of new IPEs for transition youth.

PY 2018: 1,469

Indicator 3.3: Rehabilitation rate for transition youth.

PY 2018: 54%

Indicator 3.4: Number of employment outcomes achieved by consumers who were transition-aged at the time of application for services.

PY 2018: 299

Indicator 3.5: Of the transition students who achieve competitive employment, the percent who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support.

PY 2018: 60% increase compared to the same factor at application.

Indicator 3.6: Average hourly wage of transition students rehabilitated.

PY 2018: \$9.75

Indicator 3.7: Increase participation of youth with disabilities in the Prevention and Protection Services Independent Living program in Pre-Employment Transition Services and VR Services, and thereby improve their successful outcomes in post-secondary education, employment and independent living/self-sufficiency. Number of foster care youth participating in Pre-ETS.

PY 2018: 142

**Goal 4: KRS will emphasize the meaningful involvement of people with disabilities, public/private partners, employers and other stakeholders in KRS programs, services and activities.**

Indicator 4.1: The percent of individuals who have significant disabilities among those who achieve competitive employment.

PY 2018: 96.2%

Indicator 4.2: The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio of the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.

PY 2018: .84

Indicator 4.3: Number of annual statewide stakeholder meetings.

PY 2018: NA

**B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

## **Factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities**

Factors which impeded progress include the difficulty experienced by persons with no work experience or extended periods of unemployment in getting work, the turnover rate among counselors, and difficulty in recruiting qualified VR counselor applicants, especially in the least populated geographic areas of Kansas.

## **2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

### **A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

#### **Supported employment goals**

Supported employment goals are identified in Section F. Implementation and achievement of these goals is addressed through the case review system, which monitors quality of services and outcomes, and through ongoing monitoring of service provider performance. KRS purchases supported employment services through service provider agreements with CRPs, community organizations and individuals across Kansas. In addition, specific standards for quality, timeliness, consumer involvement and outcomes are identified in service provider agreements.

#### **Supported employment (SE) indicators**

Title VI, Indicator 1.1: Number of persons with SE plans.

PY 2018: 924

Title VI, Indicator 1.2: Number of persons achieving competitive, integrated employment after receiving SE services.

PY 2018: 131

Title VI, Indicator 2.1: Geographic distribution of services (percent of counties with coverage from an SE service provider).

PY 2018: 100%

Title VI, Indicator 2.2: Percent of persons referred to a service provider who achieve employment (rehabilitation outcome) within 120 days of referral.

A data source for this indicator is pending.

Title VI, Indicator 2.3: Percent of persons referred to SE service providers who achieve successful employment outcomes.

A data source for this indicator is pending.

### **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

#### **Factors that impeded progress on SE goals**

It is difficult to maintain job coaching and SE services in the rural and frontier areas of the state. It is a challenge to find funding for extended supports after VR services end. Much of the overall disability employment system in Kansas includes sub-minimum wage employment, such as sheltered work. Improved IT

solutions are needed to better track and assess service provider outcomes and to produce “report cards” of performance.

### **3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**

#### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance accountability measures**

KRS will monitor performance on the standard performance accountability measures required for all Core Partners under WIOA. VR did not have negotiated indicators of performance for the first two years of this plan.

### **4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

#### **Update on funds used for innovation and expansion**

KRS uses the innovation and expansion authority, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act, to support the functions of the State Rehabilitation Council. Expenditures primarily relate to member travel and reimbursement for participating in meetings. Operating within existing resources, the Council does not receive any direct allocation of funds.

Consistent with the KRS goals and priorities, innovation and expansion efforts are also underway to promote improved employment outcomes for transition-aged youth and to assist community service providers to build and maintain their capacity to provide evidence-based employment services.

### **q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.**

Include the following:

#### **1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

Supported employment means competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. This service is intended for individuals:

- For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and
- Who, because of the nature and severity of the disability, need intensive supported employment services from Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) and extended services/ongoing support from non-VR sources such as community agencies in order to perform the work and maintain employment.

Supported employment also includes transitional employment for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Transitional employment means a series of temporary job placements in competitive work in integrated settings with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness. In transitional employment, the provision of ongoing support services must include continuing sequential job placements until job permanency is achieved. Supported employment services provided by KRS are time-limited and are provided for a period not to exceed 24 months unless the consumer and counselor agree to an extension in order to achieve the objectives identified in the Individual Plan for Employment. Any appropriate service needed to support and maintain an individual in supported employment may be provided. Services typically focus on:

- Job development and placement.

- Intensive on-the-job training and other training provided by skilled job coaches.
- Regular observation and coaching of the consumer at the work site.
- Discrete post-employment services that are not available from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain the job placement, such as job station redesign; repair and maintenance of assistive technology; and the replacement of prosthetic and orthotic devices.
- Coaching to develop natural supports.

Supported employment services are provided through a Customized Placement service provider agreement that identifies the following key components or milestones:

1. Creation of a job development action plan
2. Placement
3. Stabilization
4. 45 days of continuous, successful employment
5. Finalization of an extended ongoing service plan
6. Successful VR case closure in accordance with all of the requirements set out in federal regulations

Direct hourly job coaching services are provided for VR consumers in conjunction with the Supported Employment and Customized Employment milestones services described above. Short and long-term individualized job coaching is also provided through service provider agreements.

After the time-limited VR services end, the supported employment service provider maintains extended ongoing services with the consumer or has identified a plan specifying how the community-service system will provide the extended ongoing supports the consumer needs to maintain employment. These extended services are not funded with VR dollars. To reinforce and maintain stability of the job placement, ongoing services include regular contacts with:

- The consumer.
- Employers.
- Parents, guardians or other representatives of the consumer.
- Other appropriate professional, advisory and advocacy contact persons.

Individual job placements in competitive, integrated employment are the outcome of supported employment services funded by KRS. Such outcomes have higher earnings, consumer choice, community integration and more co-worker interaction. KRS supported employment outcomes do not include enclaves, work crews or other congregate work settings.

### **Service delivery system**

In implementing supported employment services, KRS emphasizes the importance of geographic distribution of services. KRS also places a priority on working with community agencies with the capacity to provide extended/ongoing support services. Providers include community developmental disability organizations, mental health centers, independent living centers, and other public and private entities. Provider agreements:

- Describe the time-limited services that will be provided through KRS for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.

- Address responsibility of the providers to coordinate the community service system, which has responsibility for funding and providing the extended ongoing services necessary for the consumer to maintain employment once they exit the VR program.

The Individual Plan for Employment is used as the basis for referral to one of the providers. It also describes the criteria, specific to each consumer, for determining that job performance is stable, determining how and when progress will be evaluated, and describing how extended ongoing support services will be provided. After the consumer reaches stability on the job, the consumer, service provider and VR counselor work together to finalize the plan for extended ongoing support services. This allows the plan to be specific and customized according to the consumer’s current work situation and support needs. As a result, the ongoing support section of the IPE may be amended, with the consumer’s agreement, in order to reflect the most current information available.

**Quality of services**

VR counselors and regional management staff are charged with assuring the quality of services provided. KRS will develop updated reports on provider performance to assist consumers in selecting services, to assist KRS and its providers in monitoring performance, and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

The performance of these providers in helping consumers secure meaningful employment and wages consistent with their goals and priorities significantly impacts the overall KRS performance on standards and indicators. Therefore, accountability benchmarks have been established with the target of 80% of persons referred to service providers obtaining jobs within an average of 120 days, and 60% of persons referred achieving successful closures. The goal is a network of effective supported employment providers whose focus is on the vocational objectives, goals, rehabilitation needs and priorities of the consumers to be served. Improved Information Technology support solutions are needed to better track and assess service provider outcomes and to produce “report cards” of performance.

The End-Dependence Kansas Initiative will provide direct service contracts to disability services providers to build and maintain their capacity to provide two evidence-based models: Individual Placements and Supports and Individualized Discovery/Supported employment.

**2. The timing of transition to extended services.**

After the consumer has achieved job stability, KRS will continue services for at least 90 days at a level and scope comparable to those expected to be provided through extended services after VR services cease. This period is intended to assure that the consumer will continue to be successful with the level of support anticipated once transition to extended services provided by the community service system has been completed. The case may be closed if stability is continued after this time period.

**Certifications**

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate     **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

Name of designated State agency     **Kansas Department for Children and Families**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:     **Michael Donnelly**

Title of Authorized Representative:     **Director of Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.\*\* Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

## Footnotes

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### Certification 1 Footnotes

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

### Certification 2 Footnotes

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

### **Certification 3 Footnotes**

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

### **Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State**

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a

Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization    **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Michael Donnelly**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Director of Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to [MAT\\_OCTAE@ed.gov](mailto:MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov)

## **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Michael Donnelly**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director of Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

## **Assurances**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

### **1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:**

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

### **2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:**

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

### **3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

**a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

**c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).**

**e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds      **No**

**f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs:      **No**

**g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.      **No**

**h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .**

**j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.**

**m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

#### **4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:**

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

**a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .**

**c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?**

Agency will provide the full range of services described above      **No**

- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs**
- j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,**
  - i. has developed and will implement,**
    - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and**
    - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and**
  - ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).**

## **5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.**

## **6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.**

## **7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:**

**a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that:**

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act**
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

## **Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State**