



*Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas*

**Combined State Plan  
Kansas Workforce Development System  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

**Section VI: Program-Specific Requirements  
for Core State Plan Programs**

**Vocational Rehabilitation  
& Supported Employment Services**

***DRAFT for Public Comment***

*Kansas Rehabilitation Services welcomes public comment on this proposed State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services.*

*Comments may be submitted to: [Peg.Spencer@dcf.ks.gov](mailto:Peg.Spencer@dcf.ks.gov)*

*Deadline: January 7, 2016*

***Special Notice***

*This Plan has been developed prior to the final information collection requirements and regulations from federal authorities. Therefore, this plan is subject to change should federal requirements warrant.*

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## **Section A: Input of the State Rehabilitation Council**

In matters of program administration and planning, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has a strong commitment to seeking the advice of consumers of vocational rehabilitation services, service providers, family members, advocates, employers and others interested in disability issues. Comprised of representatives of these stakeholder groups, the State Rehabilitation Council makes a major contribution to KRS through advice provided during regular business meetings, State Plan work sessions, Policy Committee meetings, 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 – A top priority of the Council in 2014 was to develop and implement an employer outreach program. This was accomplished with the development of the “Good for Business” marketing campaign and the addition of an Employer Development Specialist to the KRS administration staff. In 2015, the Council requested that the committee addressing employer development be re-established to maintain a strong focus on this priority.***

KRS Response: KRS agrees with the importance of re-establishing regular meetings of this committee. Beginning in CY 2016, this committee will meet prior to the start of each quarterly Council business meeting, and at other times it determines appropriate through meetings or conference calls. The KRS Employer Development Specialist will take the lead in coordinating these meetings. (Please refer to Section G of this Plan for more information on the KRS employer development strategies and activities.)

***Council comment – Previously the Council researched and recommended changes to the KRS rate structure for mileage payments and to the cost-of-living standards for the economic need (consumer financial participation) analysis.***

KRS Response: Several proposed rate changes, including those listed in the Council comment, have been reviewed and approved by the Kansas Department for Children and Families. Rates will be indexed to a percentage of state mileage standards, and in the case of cost of living standards, a percentage of the Federal Poverty Level. These changes are projected to be implemented in December 2015.

***Council comment – Members requested the opportunity to hear about innovative practices from other states and self-employment outcomes achieved by Kansas VR consumers.***

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KRS Response:

- A webinar about the Vermont progressive employment model was presented at the Council's November 20, 2015 meeting. This model is especially relevant to Kansas since it is one of the promising and evidence-based employment practices that will be implemented through the End-Dependence Kansas initiative. End-Dependence Kansas is intended to help service providers increase and sustain the capacity to provide evidence-based employment practices, thus increasing employment opportunities and outcomes for Kansans with disabilities. A Request for Information was issued November 13, 2015 to gather additional input from stakeholders and service providers to guide strategic planning and development of a competitive Request for Proposals for direct service contracts. The RFP will be issued for this initiative in the first quarter of CY 2016.
- KRS is working with its direct service staff to identify consumers with successful small business outcomes who would be interested and willing to be part of a panel presentation to the Council.

***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 and to research information necessary for eligibility determination, order of selection categories, development of Individual Plans for Employment, expenditure of VR funds, and case closures. (Please refer to Section I of this Plan for more information.)

***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 work with DCF management to identify options to address these concerns.

***Council comment: Development of soft skills is essential for employment success. This has been discussed for many years and now is supported by recent research and statewide input compiled by the Kansas State Department of Education. The Council would like KRS to research opportunities and approaches that would foster the development of such interpersonal and customer service skills.***

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KRS Response: A priority in the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services will be for paid work-based learning experiences, which will also address this issue for youth with disabilities. A key priority in this state plan is building and maintaining the capacity of KRS to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services including improved interaction with students, faculty and families to ensure work ready graduates with disabilities from secondary schools.

***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 regarding this request.

***Council comment: Increased availability of benefits counseling is needed to encourage employment among those who are concerned about losing disability benefits.***

KRS Response: KRS intends to develop a provider agreement for highly qualified benefits counseling.

### Review and analysis of consumer satisfaction

*Satisfaction surveys:* KRS contracted with the Learning Tree Institute, Girard, Kansas, to process a consumer satisfaction survey in October and November 2015. 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.

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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.)

*Stakeholder meetings:* On September 28, 2015 KRS Director Michael Donnelly conducted a stakeholder meeting. Technology was used to link participants via live audio and video from 12 communities statewide. A total of 240 individuals participated. Their input has been analyzed as part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment which is Section J of this plan.

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**Section B: Request for Waiver  
of Statewideness**

**DOES NOT APPLY**

## **Section C: Cooperative agreements With Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System**

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 Vocational Sub-Committee of the Governor's Behavioral Health Planning Council.
  - The Governor's Commission on Autism.
  - Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - KANSASWORKS State Board
  - 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.



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- 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.
- Through the Governor's Sub-Cabinet on Disability, leadership among the Kansas Departments for Children and Families (DCF), Health and Environment, Commerce, Corrections and Aging and Disability Services focuses attention on implementing employment first strategies in state agencies and tracking baseline and performance data to effectively measure outcomes. Sub-Cabinet meetings are also an opportunity for open communications among these departments and advocacy and provider organizations working in the disability system.
- The DCF Secretary is participating on a Governor-directed strategic planning effort with a focus on workforce development. DCF is the designated state agency.

### **Assistive Technology**

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.

### **Out-of-school youth**

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, such as the Youth Employment Program at Independence, Inc. in Lawrence and other similar programs, to increase employment options and outcomes.

### **New initiatives**

End-Dependence Kansas is a significant initiative to increase employment of Kansans with disabilities. Over five years, it is projected that the State will invest \$25 million through this initiative to strengthen and increase the capacity of the VR agency and community partners to provide evidence-based employment services.

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Five state agencies are collaborating to implement End-Dependence Kansas. They include the Kansas Departments for Children and Families (DCF), the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and the Kansas Department of Corrections. Each of the five agencies has senior-level staff who will serve on the End-Dependence Kansas oversight panel to ensure policy alignment, sustainability and accountability. DCF's Rehabilitation Services (RS) will serve as the lead agency.

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 disability 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.

It is expected that End-Dependence Kansas will lead to 2,000 Kansans with disabilities throughout the State achieving competitive, integrated employment after receiving newly established evidence-based employment services, e.g., discovery, individual placement supports (IPS) or 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 sub-minimum wage employment, sheltered employment, non-work day activities or other more segregated services.

To implement this initiative, RS will issue performance-based contracts with community partners to provide direct consumer services. These contracts will be established through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, which is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2016. RS is looking for traditional and non-traditional community providers to respond to the RFP. Once selected, the community partners will undergo intensive training on specific evidence-based practices and utilize them in their services. To evaluate fidelity to the service models and 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.

### **Rural economic development and state use contracts**

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.

Interaction with state use contracting programs is handled in a manner consistent with

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the competitive, integrated employment purpose of the Rehabilitation Act and regulations.

## Section D: Coordination with Education Officials

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 (PETS) 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.

### PETS

KRS will reserve 15% of its federal VR funding to provide PETS to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. PETS 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 will build and maintain its capacity to provide PETS through the addition of transition specialists to local VR offices. KRS will also explore opportunities to contract with service providers for specific components of PETS, such as self-advocacy training. KRS will coordinate with partners in the workforce development system, employers, disability service providers and local education authorities to emphasize opportunities for 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. A total of 24,317 youth ages 14 to 21 are receiving special education services or have Section 504 accommodation plans as a result of disability, and therefore are the target population for the new PETS requirements. (*Source: Kansas State Department of Education, 2015*)

### **Policies and procedure 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

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

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

KRS maintains staff liaisons for each public high school to ensure statewide coverage. In addition to working with special education staff, KRS staff contact vocational education departments, school nurses and guidance counselors to provide greater outreach to students with disabilities and their families. KRS will promote the use of Governor Brownback's 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.

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. Some examples of implementation actions are:

- 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.

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

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

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

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

- Provide joint professional development, in-service training and informational meetings for school personnel, VR staff, other adult service providers, parents

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and students. This may include orientation to programs, referral processes, policies, procedures, pertinent legislation and other areas as may be appropriate.

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

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

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

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

## **Section E: Cooperative Agreements With Private Nonprofit Organizations**

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, discovery/supported employment, job coaching, rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology, rehabilitation teaching 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. KRS paid nearly \$4.3 million through these agreements in FFY 2015.

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:

- \$121,250 to United Cerebral Palsy of Kansas (UCPK), 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.

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- \$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.



## **Section F: Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

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.

In FFY 2013, KRS also implemented a Discovery/Supported Employment service provider agreement for individuals with the most significant intellectual disabilities. Based on national research from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention at Virginia Commonwealth University, this model identifies the following key components or milestones:

1. Creation of a discovery (assessment) action plan.
2. Completion of the discovery assessment process.
3. 10 days of successful employment and finalization of an instructional plan.
4. Stabilization.
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 Customized Employment and Discovery 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.

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- 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 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.

## **Section G: Coordination with Employers**

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 employer development, 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 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.

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The State Rehabilitation Council also recommended that KRS hire an employer development and marketing specialist with the sole responsibility of meeting employer needs when hiring people with disabilities. That position was approved and hired in March 2014. The purpose of the position is to increase employer awareness about VR consumers as a qualified labor pool, and thereby increase the competitive, integrated employment outcomes achieved by Kansans with disabilities. The person in the position is also responsible for promoting the use of employment incentives and for coordinating with other national, state and local organizations to identify specific employment opportunities for Kansans with disabilities. Presentations to employer and community organizations, as well as individual contacts to businesses, are among the standard activities on an ongoing basis. The position is intended to leverage the momentum created by the Governor and the Council's committee in their focus on increasing employment of Kansans with disabilities.

Since 2014, through the employer development and marketing specialist, KRS has made contact with hundreds of employers, with various levels of engagement. Numerous employers routinely send job vacancy postings to KRS. As a result, more than 4,000 job postings have been sent to VR counselors statewide for potential matches with their consumers. At least half of these positions did not require more than a high school degree. Through these contacts there is a demonstrated high demand for health care positions.

Some innovative initiatives with employers that are underway include the following:

- A workshop with a large hospital and health services company regarding its on-line application and screening processes. Participants were able to learn about how to more effectively use the on-line application process with VR consumers and the response time expectations of companies after vacant positions are posted. Similar workshops are pending with the Veterans' Administration and an aircraft manufacturer.
- A major energy company is interested in creating a training program for transition youth.
- An ironworker trade union is interested in offering its apprenticeship program to youth with disabilities.
- A pilot project is pending with a major national on-line shopping company to use a preferred vendor as a single point of contact to hire workers with disabilities. A major hospital and a plastics manufacturing firm are also exploring similar inclusion programs.
- A national candy manufacturing company has a campaign to interest Kansas high school students in pursuing manufacturing work. They are interested in including transition-aged youth with disabilities in this initiative.
- Extensive outreach and communication are underway with federal contractors with 503 compliance requirements.

Collaboration with workforce development system Core Partners and local workforce operators, as described in the Combined Portion of this Plan, will enhance the KRS

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employer engagement activities. All Partners are committed to vigorously representing the employment needs of individuals with disabilities and other consumers with significant barriers to employment.

## **Section H: Interagency Cooperation**

### **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.

### **End-Dependence Kansas demonstrates interagency collaboration**

The End-Dependence Kansas initiative demonstrates interagency cooperation that is underway to increase competitive, integrated employment outcomes. Five state agencies are collaborating to implement the initiative. In addition to KRS, KDADS and KDHE, they include the Kansas Departments of Commerce and Corrections. The Kansas Department of Commerce is the designated state agency for workforce programs authorized under Title I and III of WIOA. Each of the five agencies has senior-level staff who will serve on the End-Dependence Kansas oversight panel to ensure policy alignment, sustainability and accountability. KRS is the lead agency.

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.

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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, KRS will issue performance-based contracts with community partners to provide direct consumer services. These contracts will be established through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, which is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2016. KRS is looking for traditional and non-traditional community providers to respond to the RFP. Once selected, the community partners will undergo training on specific evidence-based practices and utilize them in their 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.

### **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 KDADS strategic planning team to integrate mental health and substance use disorder services into a recovery oriented system of care.
- The Developmental Disabilities Council.
- The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns.
- The Employment First Commission.

The Governor's Disability Sub-Cabinet, which includes DCF/KRS, KDADS, KDHE and Commerce, also addresses strategies to infuse an employment first focus into state services and programs.

## **Section I: Comprehensive System Of Personnel Development**

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.

As of November 2015, KRS employs 64 vocational rehabilitation counselors who deliver basic VR and supported employment services through local service centers. There are 15 vacancies according to the position management report provided by the budget division of the Department for Children and Families (DCF), the designated state agency.

The number of persons served in FFY 2015 was 11,419, resulting in a counselor to consumer ratio of 1:178. The average VR counselor active caseload as of September 30, 2015 was 97. In addition, KRS employs eight 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.



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## Counselor qualifications

KRS maintains a database about the educational qualifications/credentials of counselors. A total of 41 of the 64 counselors currently meet the requirements of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The 23 others are working to complete the necessary additional course work to meet the national educational standard associated with being CRC-eligible, which was the standard prior to WIOA.

## 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 on the previous page.)

Challenges in recruiting and retaining counselors with master's level degrees, particularly in some rural areas of the state, continues to be a significant factor impacting staffing levels.

*Note regarding the table below: Information is based on the number of personnel employed as of September 30, 2015. Projected vacancies over the next five years are based on a 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.*

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Administrative staff	25	1	10
2	Counselors	79	15	150
3	Staff supporting counselors	35	5.5	15

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.

## Institutions of higher education preparing VR professionals

Emporia State University (ESU) currently offers a master's degree program in rehabilitation counseling. In the Fall of 2014, ESU also implemented a 40-credit hour online master's program in rehabilitation counseling. There are currently 16 students enrolled online and eight on campus, for a total of 24. Looking ahead, ESU projects

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zero graduates in the Fall 2015, four in Spring 2016, six in Fall 2016 and 12 in Spring 2017, for a total of 22 over the next two years.

Institution	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Students sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
Emporia State University	24	0	10	0

### **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 23 of the 64 currently employed counselors, or 36%, 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.

The Personnel Services office in the DSA has developed a recruitment brochure and 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 \$1,465 bi-weekly.
- The graduate training program for rehabilitation counselors at Emporia State University anticipates a limited number of graduates compared to the vacancies

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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. This situation may be alleviated to some degree with additional flexibility afforded through the new WIOA standards.
- KRS has also experienced difficulty recruiting counselor candidates for the rural and frontier areas of the state.

### 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. Based on the updated CSPD standards in Title IV of WIOA (the Rehabilitation Act), KRS will implement the following standards:

**VR Counselor:** 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 degree in Counseling, Rehabilitation Psychology, Counseling Psychology, or Clinical Social Work plus the additional education requirements described below: or

Standard 4: A master's or doctorate with one of the following majors:

- Behavioral Health
- Behavioral Science
- Business Administration
- Disability Studies
- Human Relations
- Human Services
- Law
- Management
- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychology
- Psychometrics
- Public Administration
- Rehabilitation Administration/Services
- Social Work

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Special Education  
Vocational Assessment/Evaluation  
Plus the additional education requirements described below.

**Additional education requirements for Standards 3 and 4:** Candidates selected under Standards 3 and 4 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.

In areas of the state where it is difficult to recruit individuals who meet these requirements, such as rural and frontier regions, KRS may hire the best qualified candidate with the approval of the Director and on the condition that the individual agrees to meet the master's degree standard within five years of the employment start date. 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.

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:

- 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,

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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; and

- Demonstrated paid or unpaid experience, for not less than one year, consisting of—
  - Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center;
  - Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individual with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or
  - 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.

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.

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- 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.

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.

### **Review by the State Rehabilitation Council**

The Council periodically reviews and provides guidance on counselor qualifications and evaluations.

### **Staff development**

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

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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.

### **Dissemination of information and research**

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.

### **Evaluating the performance of counselors and other personnel**

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.

In FFY 2010, KRS implemented a comprehensive Performance Management System. This system established consistent counselor performance standards related to quality and policy compliance reflected through case reviews; timeliness for eligibility and IPE development; the number of new IPEs developed; the number of consumers rehabilitated; and the rehabilitation rate. Competencies related to professional conduct, timely responses to consumer and other inquiries, and effective caseload management are also included in this performance management process. Consistent standards were also established for supervisors and administrators.

### **Personnel to address individual communication needs**

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

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foreign language interpreters. When appropriate, family members may assist with communication if that is the consumer's informed choice.

### **Coordination of personnel development under the individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement 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.



## **Section J: Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

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.

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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: 4.70

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.

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- 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

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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.

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- 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 to this Section.

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

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### **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.)

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### 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.

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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.



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## 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%

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- 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%).

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## 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

<b>Response options:</b>	<b>Rank Order of Effectiveness</b>
One-on-one contact from a VR counselor	1
Brochures and informational materials	2
In-service training at my school	3
Informational fair outside of regular school hours	4
VR personnel participation in IEP meetings	5
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate with my counselor or special education coop staff</li></ul>	

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- 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

<b>Response options:</b>	<b>Rank Order of Effectiveness</b>
VR personnel participation in IEP meetings	1
One-on-one contact from a VR counselor	2
Informational meetings for families, such as a parent night focused on VR services	3
Brochures and informational materials	4
Informational fair (with VR and other service organizations) outside of regular school hours	5
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>	

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

<b>Code</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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?"

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

<b>Response options:</b>	<b>Rank Order of Effectiveness</b>
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

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:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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%

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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

<b>Code</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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

<b>Code</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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%

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## 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

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6. VR successes and compliments
7. Need for VR marketing and awareness campaign
8. Needs and issues
9. Quality assurance
10. Consumer engagement



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## 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?

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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.

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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.

## **Section K: Annual Estimates**

According to the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics, there are 1,730,369 individuals ages 18-64 living in Kansas, 178,125 of whom are individuals with disabilities, a prevalence rate of 10.3%. (*Source: 2014 Disability Statistics Compendium*)

A total of 24,317 youth ages 14 to 21 are receiving special education services or have Section 504 accommodation plans as a result of disability. (*Source: Kansas State Department of Education, 2012*)

For FFY 2017, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) projects that services will be provided for 12,128 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 2017 is projected. Projections are subject to change based on budget appropriations and allocations.

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Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Category 1 – Title I	\$10,367,146	9,020	\$1,149
Category 1 – Title VI	\$300,000	343	\$875
Category 2 – Title I	\$3,019,432	2,485	\$1,215
Category 3 – Title I	\$349,048	280	\$1,245
Totals	\$14,035,626	12,128	NA

## Section L: State Goals and Priorities

### Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)

**Mission:** To protect children, promote healthy families and encourage personal responsibility.

**DCF Wildly Important Goal (WIG) for 2016:** Increase self-reliance among Kansans served from 33% to 51% by December 31, 2016.

Self-reliance is a term to describe one's ability to attain independence in a variety of living situations, including gainful and meaningful employment, responsible and effective parenting and thriving, healthy families.

### 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 implement the following goals and priorities to:

- Contribute to the Department for Children and Families Wildly Important Goal.
- 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 emphasizing employment outcomes for Kansans with disabilities, accountability and continuous performance improvement.

### 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.

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- KRS expects 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

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.
- Work sessions with the State Rehabilitation Council on development of goals and priorities.

**Goal #1: Kansans with disabilities will achieve quality, competitive, integrated employment.**

### Strategies for Goal #1:

- A. Use service delivery strategies to promote:
  - High-wage employment.
  - Employment in high-demand jobs.
  - Employment in jobs with career pathways.
  - Full employment.
- B. Assist people with disabilities to use the resources of the workforce development system, according to their individual needs, to achieve their employment goals.
- C. Invest in capacity building for Kansas community agencies and disability service providers to build and sustain the use of evidence-based employment services and supports.
- D. Maximize the successful employment of recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- E. Build and maintain 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.

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- F. Build and maintain the capacity necessary to provide adults with disabilities employed in sub-minimum wage jobs opportunities to choose and achieve competitive, integrated employment. (Section 511 of WIOA)
- To facilitate informed choice, KRS will build and maintain the capacity to provide information and career counseling services about competitive, integrated employment options every six months during an individual's first year of sub-minimum wage employment and annually thereafter.
  - For individuals choosing to pursue competitive, integrated employment, KRS will build and maintain the capacity to provide comprehensive evidence-based VR services for this expanded caseload.
- G. Maintain a robust accountability system that addresses:
- Achievement of employment outcomes.
  - Consistency with policy, timeliness, evidence of effective career counseling and guidance, effective use of resources, and employment outcomes, as measured through case reviews/quality assurance mechanisms.
  - Provider performance.
  - Effective communication with consumers.
  - Expenditure reviews.
- H. Pursue opportunities for cross-informational training between KRS and key stakeholder groups, including service delivery systems for persons with developmental disabilities or mental illness, special education personnel, service providers, workforce development system partners and others interested in learning more about how the VR program can support the competitive, integrated employment goals of Kansans with disabilities.

### Indicators for Goal #1:

In addition to reporting on the Common Performance Measures that apply to all Core Partners under WIOA, KRS will track the following indicators as measures of success for this goal.

- 1.1 Number of persons achieving competitive, integrated employment.
- 1.2 Percent of persons achieving competitive, integrated employment who are working full-time.
- 1.3 Average hourly wage of persons employed.
- 1.4 Average hours worked per week.



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- 1.5 Percent of persons employed who report their own income as their primary source of support at case closure, a significant milestone toward self-reliance.
- 1.6 The number of VR consumers referred to other components of the workforce development system.
- 1.7 The number of referrals received from other components of the workforce system.
- 1.8 The number of consumers who access services from workforce operators and Adult Education.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The number of VR consumers receiving qualified benefits counseling.

**Goal #2: KRS will emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities and improve the outreach and outcomes for transition-aged students.**

### **Strategies for Goal #2:**

KRS will implement the following strategies:

- A. Build and maintain VR capacity to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).
- B. Build partnerships with school transition personnel to encourage that career-focused and work-based experiences are incorporated into transition Individual Education Plans and to increase referrals of PETS-eligible students to the VR program.
- C. 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 stakeholders to develop informational materials for students, families and school personnel.
  - Explore opportunities to collaborate with benefits planning entities to address employment incentives and supports with transition youth and their families.
  - Improve the outreach and referral process with transition students, parents and education to encourage more clear communication and increased applications for services.

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- D. Collaborate with Prevention and Protection Services to increase awareness in the foster care system about PETS/transition and vocational rehabilitation services to empower foster care youth with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment and self-reliance.
- E. Collaborate with employers 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.
- F. Build and maintain the capacity necessary to provide youth with disabilities (ages 14 to 24) the VR and PETS services necessary to achieve the optimal employment outcome of competitive, integrated employment, and thereby diverting them from transitioning from public school directly into sub-minimum wage employment. (Section 511 of WIOA)

### **Indicators for Goal #2:**

KRS will track the following indicators as measures of success for this goal.

- 2.1 Number of youth with disabilities who achieve competitive, integrated employment.
- 2.2 Number of students receiving PETS.
- 2.3 Number of youth participating in paid work-based learning experiences.
- 2.4 Number of youth participating in VR services diverted from direct entry into sub-minimum wage employment.

## **Section M: Order of Selection**

### **Status of order of selection**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) projects that all categories in Order of Selection will remain open with no waiting list during the remainder of FFY 2016 and throughout FFY 2017.

### **Justification for order of selection**

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.

### **Exemption for job retention**

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.

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## Description of priority categories

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.

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### **Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order**

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.

### **Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved**

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.

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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 the remainder of FFY 2016 and through 2017. Projections are subject to change based on the analysis (justification) factors identified in this Attachment and funding appropriations.

*Notes related to Table below: Projections are based on FFY 2015 data. 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.*

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Outcome goals 26s	Outcome goals 28s	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1	9,363	1,340	1,062	952 days	\$6,799
2	2,485	363	288	857 days	\$5,850
3	280	50	39	744 days	\$4,287
Total (persons)	12,128	1,753	1,389		

## Section N: Goals and Plans For Distribution of Title VI Funds

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.

In FFY 2013, KRS also implemented a Discovery/Supported Employment service provider agreement for individuals with the most significant intellectual disabilities. Based on national research from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention at Virginia Commonwealth University, this model identifies the following key components or milestones:

1. Creation of a discovery (assessment) action plan
2. Completion of the discovery assessment process
3. 10 days of successful employment and finalization of an instructional plan
4. Stabilization
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.**

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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.*

### **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.



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

### **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.

Led by KRS, this initiative also includes the Kansas Departments of Commerce, Corrections, Health and Environment, and Aging and Disability Services. End-Dependence Kansas will leverage the resources and expertise of these departments to identify the most effective collaborative funding approaches and to increase supported employment outcomes for Kansans with disabilities. For example, the Departments on Aging and Disability Services and Commerce contributed non-federal resources to use as matching funds for the VR program and its End-Dependence Kansas initiative. Direct service contracts will be issued following a competitive bid process to community service providers statewide to assist them to build and maintain capacity for evidence-based employment models of service delivery.

A priority target population for End-Dependence Kansas is youth transitioning from school to work. End-Dependence Kansas, coupled with outreach for Pre-Employment Transition Services and Section 511 services to divert youth from direct entry into sub-minimum wage work, will expand supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. Significant training and technical assistance will be focused on improved communication with students and youth with disabilities encouraging competitive integrated employment. Also, in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Education, KRS will offer opportunities for training and technical assistance for school personnel to learn and understand the needs of students and youth pursuing employment rather than services only, to establish and implement the soft skills and employment preparedness skills needed by employers and how and when to complete a referral to the VR program. In addition to these strategies, KRS will work collaboratively to assure Title I youth services are readily available to students and youth with disabilities to enjoy work-based learning, pre-apprenticeships, career exploration and coaching, etc.

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.

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- Create a service provider agreement to expand the availability of highly qualified benefits counselors so that consumers have accurate information about employment incentives.

## **Section O: State's Strategies to Achieve Goals and Priorities; to Support Innovation and Expansion; and to Overcome Barriers, to the Extent They Exist, to Access to Services**

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

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.

These goals, related strategies and data indicators are addressed in detail in Section L

To assure implementation, KRS will use the Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX) model, consistent with the strategic planning approach of the Department for Children and Families, the designated state agency. 4DX is a method to assist organizations to focus on the most important strategic priorities in the midst of the whirlwind of competing demands. 4DX components include focusing on the wildy important, acting on lead measures, keeping a compelling scoreboard, and creating a cadence of accountability.

### **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. Specifically, the following functions assist KRS in achieving its goals and priorities related to innovation and expansion:

### **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 [Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)]. Title III staff are state employees co-located throughout the five local areas. The Director and administrative staff serve on the WIOA State Plan Management Team. Along with

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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 state and 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.

### **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, discovery/supported employment, 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.

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## **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.

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

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

- KRS will expand its capacity to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services through the addition of staff and through contracts or service provider agreements.
- 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. As a result of increased outreach and services, about 22% of the total persons served are youth with disabilities (FFY 2015).
- 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.

## **Competitive, integrated employment for people with the most significant disabilities**

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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 intellectual disabilities, KRS implemented a systems change initiative called Great Expectations in FFY 2010. The purposes of the initiative were to:

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

The University of Kansas Center for Developmental Disabilities and Virginia Commonwealth University provided training, technical assistance and evaluation. When analyzing the outcomes of this initiative, the University of Kansas found that the “KRS pay-for-performance supplement to the fee-for-service payments moves the KRS payment system towards an outcome-oriented approach that is mutually beneficial to the funding agency (KRS), the Community Rehabilitation Services Programs (CRSP), and to the individuals with a disability receiving services. *KRS has initiated a Service Description and Funding Arrangement for Discovery and Supported Employment Services that has the potential to be a model best practice approach.*”

Building on lessons learned through Great Expectations, KRS has developed and is implementing End-Dependence Kansas, which is described in more detail in Sections C and O.

### **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.

### **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

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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.

### **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 Governor's Commission on Autism.
- The Working Healthy (Medicaid buy-in program) Advisory Council. Still in place?
- 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 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.

### **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.

### **Performance related to standards and indicators**

In addition to the specific action planning described above related to achieving agency goals and priorities, in 2010 KRS implemented a new Performance Management Process establishing individual expectations and evaluation standards for all staff. For

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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.

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

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.



## **Section P: Evaluation and Reports of Progress**

### **Highlights and accomplishments**

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) reports the following accomplishments in implementing the State Plan Goals and Priorities identified in the FFY 2015 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Plan. These highlights are based on FFY 2015 indicators.

- A total of 1,345 Kansans with disabilities achieved stable employment as a result of VR services, earning an average of \$9.88 an hour. VR consumers achieved employment in high-wage, high-demand jobs, for example: more than \$40 an hour as an Information Technology Systems Administrator 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 72.4%, 57% higher than at application. This represents a significant milestone toward increased self-reliance.
- The number of successful employment outcomes after participating in post-secondary education was 242. This indicator represents a significant quality measure as increased education and technical training often lead to higher-wage, career track positions and therefore increased self-reliance.
- KRS receives reimbursement funds from the Social Security Administration for consumers who are recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) when those individuals work at the Substantial Gainful Activity earnings level for at least nine months. In FFY 2015, reimbursement funds received by the agency totaled \$1,123,976.
- Providing employment-focused services for transition youth is a priority for KRS. KRS has traditionally defined transition youth as persons who are age 21 or younger at the time of application). Under WIOA, the definition of youth is inclusive of persons ages 14 through 24. When youth achieve an early attachment to employment and all of its advantages, the likelihood of their reliance on public benefits through their lifetime is reduced. Of the KRS consumers achieving employment in FFY 2015, 299 or 21% were transition youth. (KRS has traditionally defined transition youth as persons who were 21 years old or younger at the time of application for VR.) They earned an average hourly wage of \$9.40. However, for transition youth who participated in post-secondary education prior to employment, the average wage increased by 26% to \$11.80 an hour.

### **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.

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## 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.

## Performance related to federal indicators

The following information is based on KRS analysis of data for FFY 2015. The federal Rehabilitation Services Administration has not yet published its final report on these indicators.

- Indicator 1.1 (number of rehabilitations). 1,345.
- Indicator 1.2 (rehabilitation rate). 42.8%.
- Indicator 1.3 (competitive employment). 99.6%
- Indicator 1.4 (outcomes for persons with significant disabilities). 96.7%
- Indicator 1.5 (average hourly wage). \$9.88 or a ratio of .47 of the average hourly wage of all employed Kansans.
- Indicator 1.6 (self-support). 72.4% for an increase of 57% compared the rate at application.

## 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 Federal Fiscal Year 2015, the most recent complete federal 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.  
FFY 2015: 1,345

Indicator 1.2: The percentage of individuals rehabilitated who achieve competitive employment.  
FFY 2015: 99.6%

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

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Kansans.

FFY 2015: \$9.88 or a ratio of .47 of the average hourly wage of all employed Kansans.

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 compared to the percent at application.

FFY 2015: 72.4% for an increase of 57% compared the rate at application.

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

FFY 2015: 29

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

FFY 2015: 16.8%

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.

FFY 2015: 81

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.

FFY 2015: \$1,123,975

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

FFY 2015: 35.7%

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

FFY 2015: 242

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.

FFY 2015: 10

### **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.

FFY 2015: 42.8%

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

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FFY 2015: 97%

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

FFY 2015: 87%

Indicator 2.4: Percent for whom IPEs are developed within 120 days or less from eligibility (prior to February 1, 2015) and within 90 days (February 1 and thereafter) unless the consumer agrees to an extension.

FFY 2015: 89%

Indicator 2.5: Average overall consumer satisfaction rating from the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model (ratings above 5 indicate “more satisfied than not”).

FFY 2015: Open cases = 6.78 Cases closed in employment = 7.67 Cases closed without an employment outcome = 4.70

Indicator 2.6: Average stakeholder (education personnel, advocates and service providers) rating using the ACSI model (ratings above 5 indicate “more satisfied than not”).

FFY 2015: Service providers: 5.72; educators: 4.72; general advocates category not surveyed.

Indicator 2.7: Average expended per rehabilitation for the life of the case.

FFY 2015: \$6,464

Indicator 2.8: Annual number of persons served (status 02-24 +32).

FFY 2015: 11,419

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.

FFY 2015: 54%

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

FFY 2015: \$9.24

Indicator 2.13: Average consumer satisfaction ratings of placement and supported

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employment providers measured at the time of KRS case closure.  
Not currently surveyed.

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.

FFY 2015: 76%

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.

FFY 2015: 98%

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.

FFY 2015: 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.

FFY 2015: 69%

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

FFY 2015: 99%

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

FFY 2015: 94%

Indicator 2.20: Number of potential fraud cases submitted for investigation to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) Fraud Unit.

NA

Indicator 2.21: Dollars recovered after investigation and action by the DCF Fraud Unit.

NA

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

FFY 2015: 100%

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

Baseline FFY 2015: 92%

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Indicator 2.24: Number of employment outcomes for which the employer received an Employer Partner Incentive payment from the Kansas Department of Commerce. (Incentive discontinued.)

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

Indicator 3.1: Number of new applications from transition youth.  
FFY 2015: 882

Indicator 3.2: Number of new IPEs for transition youth.  
FFY 2015: 548

Indicator 3.3: Rehabilitation rate for transition youth.  
FFY 2015: 44.1%

Indicator 3.4: Number of employment outcomes achieved by consumers who were transition-aged at the time of application for services.  
FFY 2015: 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.  
FFY 2015: 64% increase compared to the same factor at application.

Indicator 3.6: Average hourly wage of transition students rehabilitated.  
FFY 2015: \$9.40

Indicator 3.7: By 2015, the work for the VR program will result in 100 youth with disabilities (ages 21 or younger at the time of application) who had previously been in foster care achieving competitive, integrated employment as adults.  
TBD

Indicator 3.8: By 2015, the application rate for VR services will be increased to at least 50% of youth with disabilities ages 16 and older in foster care.  
TBD

### **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.  
FFY 2015: 96.7%

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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.

FFY 2015: .92

Indicator 4.3: Number of annual statewide stakeholder meetings.

FFY 2015: 1 event connected to 12 communities via technology; 240 persons participated.

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

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

FFY 2015: 645

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

FFY 2015: 110

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

FFY 2015: 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 support from IT.

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 support from IT.

### **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.

### **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. Federal information collection requirements and regulations have not been finalized at the time of this plan submission.

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### **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.



## **Section Q: Quality, Scope and Extent Of Supported Employment Services**

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

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In FFY 2013, KRS also implemented a Discovery/Supported Employment service provider agreement for individuals with the most significant intellectual disabilities. This service delivery model is part of the Great Expectations systems change initiative. Based on national research from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention at Virginia Commonwealth University, this model identifies the following key components or milestones:

1. Creation of a discovery (assessment) action plan
2. Completion of the discovery assessment process
3. 10 days of successful employment and finalization of an instructional plan
4. Stabilization
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, Customized Employment and Discovery 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 resulting in competitive, integrated employment are the KRS priority for outcomes of supported employment services because they are associated with important quality indicators: higher earnings, consumer choice, community integration, and more co-worker interaction.

### **Timing of the 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.

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## 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

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services providers to build and maintain their capacity to provide two evidence-based models: Individual Placements and Supports and Individualized Discovery/Supported employment.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications and Assurances

### Certifications

<b>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</b>	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) 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, <sup>1</sup> and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act <sup>2</sup> ;
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency) <sup>3</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>4</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>5</sup> , 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;
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 <sup>6</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>7</sup> , 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

<sup>1</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> No funds under title I 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 .

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

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	services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
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;
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) 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;
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
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.

### 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:

<b>The State Plan must provide assurances that:</b>	
1.	<b>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:</b> 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.	<b>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined</b>

	<p><b>State Plan and Its Supplement:</b> 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.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:</b> The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act..</li> <li>(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 (Option A or B must be selected):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) is an independent State commission.</li> <li>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council</li> </ul> </li> <li>(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. the non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60.</li> <li>(d) 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. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No)</li> <li>(e) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act . Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No)</li> <li>(f) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is 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? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.</li> <li>(g) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>(h) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>(j) 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.</li> <li>(k) 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.</li> <li>(l) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Administration of the Provision of VR Services:</b> The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>(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 .</li> <li>(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? (Yes/No)</li> <li>(d) comply with all required available comparable services and benefits, determined to be available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act and.</li> <li>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act .</li> <li>(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.</li> <li>(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.</li> <li>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, 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, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>



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	<p>(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</p>
5.	<p><b>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:</b></p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(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.</p>
6.	<p>(a) <b>Financial Administration:</b> 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.</p> <p>(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.</p>
7.	<p>(a) <b>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</b> The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation</li></ol>

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	<p>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</p> <p>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.</p>
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