## LMI and the Demand Side RRTC Projects: Dashboards, Surveys, Interviews, and Sample Analysis

### Key survey findings from the Business Relations Survey, May-Lorie Saint Laurent, JD-VRTAC & Demand-Side RRTC

#### National Survey of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies and Business Relations Kelly Haines, Kathleen West-Evans, Linda Mock, Libin Zhang, and May-Lorie Saint Laurent

**Background:**

* As a follow-up to our 2014 survey, on May 31, we opened the fielding period for the 2017 survey.
* Similarly to the initial questionnaire, this tool is divided into 4 sections: a) business relations strategies and activities, b) staffing and organizational structure, c) outreach and business contacts, and d) use of labor market information. These sections are preceded by a short about you section, and followed by a topical module on external resources for business relations.
* Like the 2014 survey, the 2017 survey is being administered in collaboration with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Employment Team (The NET). As in the previous iteration, the survey is targeted to the agency’s NET single point of contact (SPOC).
* This research is funded by NIDILRR as part of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Demand-Side Strategies.

**Method:**

* The survey tool was developed using an iterative process. Some of the questions posed in 2014 were altered in order to measure the impact of WIOA on business relations capacity, and to look at trends over time such as changes in staffing patterns, service provision etc..
* It was made available to all the VR agencies using the online survey tool SurveyGizmo.
* For the purposes of this analysis, we will be comparing the data from 2014 to the data received in 2017 for agencies that completed the survey both years.

**Results:**

* In 2014 and 2017, 70.6% (24 out of 34) of the sample had a Master’s degree.
* In 2014, 51.4% (17 out of 33) were certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC), and in 2017, 39.4% (13 out of 33) were CRC.
* In 2014, 41.2% (14 out of 34) came from a business background, in 2017 61.8% (21 out of 34) came from a business background.
* In 2014, 93.9% (31 out of 33) believed that their VR agency served businesses as VR customers in 2017, 97% (32 out of 33) share that belief.
* 82.4% (28 out of 34) have expanded VR agency business relations programs or initiatives since 2014. In those agencies, business relations positions have either been created and/or new staff have been hired.
* 90.9% (30 out of 33) currently have business relations programs or initiatives related to the WIOA.
* In 2014, 79.4% of agencies had specialized staff implementing BR. In 2017, 73.5% have specialized staff. The following agencies did not have specialized staff implementing BR in 2014, but currently do: New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services, and Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.
* 55.9% (19 out of 34) currently have a dedicated BR unit (or equivalent department), 46.9 % of which were created in or after 2014.
* In 2017, 88.2% (30 out of 34) are using traditional LMI and 73.5% (25 out of 34) are using Real-time LMI. In 2014, 34.5% (10 out of 29) were using Real-time LMI.

**Conclusions and Next Steps:**

**Conclusion:**

* Preliminary results comparing data from agencies that completed the survey in 2014 and in 2017 show changes in staffing patter, investment in BR such as the creation of dedicated BR units and the addition of specialized staff, and awareness and use of LMI particularly of Real-time LMI.

**Next Steps:**

* Continue data analysis by incorporating more surveys as they arrive.
* Determine manner in which to process data received from agencies that have merged since 2014.

### Qualitative Interviews of VR counselors using LMI in Alabama, Melissa Alford, Demand-Side RRTC

#### The Use of LMI Data in Alabama VR Offices: Qualitative Interviews, Libin Zhang and Melissa Alford. Institute for Community Inclusion

**Background:**

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts-Boston partnered with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) to explore tools and methods that VR agencies could use to become more responsive to labor market information (LMI). Beginning in 2012, ICI and ADRS launched the Study of the ADRS LMI Dashboard. This poster presents findings from ADRS personnel interviews that helped inform the creation of the LMI Dashboard.

**Research Questions:**

* How do ADRS personnel **define LMI**?
* What **sources** do they use?
* If people used LMI in their work, **how did they use it**?
* If do not use it, **would they like to use it**?
* How did use of LMI **vary by ADRS role** (leadership, counselor, business relations counselors, supervisors)
* What are the **strengths and limitations** of using LMI data?
* How does ADRS use data generated from its long-standing **business relations unit?**
* **What elements are important to include in a Dashboard**?

**Sample**:

* ICI **conducted in-depth interviews with ADRS professionals** from different regions of Alabama about their use of LMI data in their work. A project liaison provided a list of staff and contact information. ICI staff directly contacted 30 ADRS staff to participate in an interview and completed 24 interviews including 14 vocational rehabilitation counselors (one in each district office), 5 business relations counselors, 3 supervisors, and 2 members of the leadership team. Interviews were conducted in 2014.
* ICI hosted **four on-site focus groups** in the spring of 2015.

**Results:**

* **How Do ADRS Personnel Define LMI?** ADRS personnel defined “LMI” in many different ways from Bureau of Labor Statistics data to personal knowledge of local labor markets. Most ADRS personnel emphasized labor market information originating from their business relations units as LMI.
* **What Sources do ADRS Personnel Use?** ADRS VRCs reported that they were taught to use the O\*NET and the Occupational Outlook Handbook in graduate level rehabilitation counseling programs. However, on the job, they expanded to using social media sources, ADRS generated LMI data and other emerging sources.
* **How did they report using LMI? How did that vary by role?** 
  + **VR Counselors** frequently incorporated LMI data into their work to Identify openings, job matching, placement, and training
  + **Business Relations Counselors** seemed to be the most active users of LMI to follow trends and which businesses they need to target for relationships
  + People **with less direct contact** with either job seekers or businesses were less likely to incorporate LMI into their work
* **Strengths and Limitations**
  + **ADRS personnel** expressed an interest in expanding their use of LMI and incorporating it into the job search process
  + ARDS personnel **overwhelmingly felt they needed more training** if they were going to further integrate LMI into their work
  + People felt **the data was not easily available or accessible** to them or their clients.
  + They suggested creating some common sites or common links to share the data
* **Use of ADRS Business Relations LMI:** Prior to the Dashboard, ADRS BR unit used Mr. ED as their business management system. One issue was that Mr. ED data and the case management data were not linked. VR counselors expressed that they were not familiar with what is available through their BR Unit.

Traditional

* The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)
* Alabama’s Comprehensive Labor Market Information System (ACLMIS)
* Occupational Outlook Handbook
* Bureau of Labor Statistics
* Alabama Department of Labor
* RSA listserv

Social Media

* Monster
* Indeed
* USA Jobs
* Alabama Job Link
* Facebook/LinkedIn
* CareerBuilder
* Caregiver

Local Data

* Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM)
* Chamber of Commerce
* ADRS Internal Data
* Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance (BCEDA)
* Career One Stop

**Conclusions:**

**Dashboard elements:** Interviews supported the goal to integrate LMI and Business Relations data into a Dashboard that could be used by VR Counselors.

### LMI Catalog: Using LMI in VR, Kartik Trivedi and May-Lorie Saint Laurent, JD-VRTAC & Demand-Side RRTC

#### Overview:

SVRAs have always used LMI in one way or the other, particularly during the career exploration phase of the VR process. With rapidly evolving economy keep pace with the emerging trends in labor market has become more important. The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act in July 22 of 2014 has brought LMI’s role in the VR on the forefront. Agencies are no long relying on traditional sources of LMI, and are more interested in other source of data and more importantly on Labor Market Intelligence.

#### What is LMI?

Labor Market Information or LMI includes delivering and analyzing data related to the labor force. This data can include:

* Unemployment and Employment Statistics
* Occupational and Industrial Data
* Wages and other Demographic indicators
* Labor turnover and mobility
* General Economic trends

#### Types of LMI

Traditional

* Systematic collection of data at Federal, State and Local level
* Mostly managed by the government agencies
* Covers broad range of metrics and available as structured tables
* Collected over long durations
* Key metrics include – employment levels, employment growth, demographic variables etc.

Real Time

* Data collected from online job postings.
* Online job postings are scrapped to identify important characteristics of a job
* This data is concurrently collected
* Mostly managed by private enterprises
* Key metrics include – labor market trends, wages, skills in demand and emerging occupations

LMI Intelligence/Reconnaissance

* Data gathered from employers, chambers of commerce and industry associations by the employees of the VR agency
* Mostly available in unstructured form
* Captures emerging developments in local labor market
* Key metrics include – number of type of job openings in the region

#### LMI Use by VR Roles

* **Counselor**
  + Assisting a jobseeker identify an employment goal.
  + Understanding future trends in specific occupations or industries of interest to the jobseeker
* **Business Relations Representative**
  + Develop business outreach strategies that address immediate needs of business community in the local area
  + Maintain and improve connections with key business in the local economy
  + Identify business engagement strategies that are tailored to VR jobseekers with limited skills
* **Job Developer**
  + Target job development to immediate needs of employers
  + Explore career ladders for entry-level jobs
* **Field Services Director**
  + Align VR workforce to accommodate for local/regional labor market
  + Identify short-term and long-term training partnerships
* **Director**
  + Identify career pathways and workforce system partnership opportunities
  + Evaluate how business relations personnel are identifying unique employment opportunities

#### Metrics to Assess LMI

* Accuracy
* Timeliness
* Geographic Specificity
* Usability

#### Observations

* Traditional LMI
  + Widely used and available for free
  + Not always current
  + Often not available at the local level
* Real-Time LMI
  + Mostly proprietary
  + Costly to obtain
* LMI Intelligence/Reconnaissance
  + Real data collected by employees at local level
  + Often unstructured
* General Observations
  + LMI's use varies with the role of the staff using it
  + There is great value in investing in agency-generated LMI

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### LMI and the JD-VRTAC

#### Connecticut Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind

**Objective:** Increase VR counselor LMI knowledge, which will help them plan educational and career pathways that meet both individuals who are blind and business needs.​

**Project Activities**

* Assess and choose LMI data sources​
* Assess agency’s policies that act as barriers to job effectiveness​
* Provide VR counselor LMI professional development​
* Develop business relations strategic plan informed by LMI research​
* Implement business engagement ​
* Evaluate outcomes:​
  + Increased VR Counselor LMI knowledge​
  + Increased employer satisfaction​
  + Increased placements​
* Make adjustments as needed ​

**Accomplishments**

* Conducted VR counselor survey to access baseline LMI baseline knowledge​
* Trained 12 staff on LMI use and ethical considerations​
* Streamlined VR paperwork and increased VR counselor business outreach 2 hours per week​
* Implemented Career Index Plus on all IPE’s usage​
* Assigned a rehabilitation teacher as point person to train clients to use Career Index Plus​
* Maximized resources to reduce case load size per counselor ​
* Began formalizing business partnerships to maintain long lasting relationships by education them to LMI to meet their needs​

**Next Steps​**

* Make Career Index Plus accessible to 100% of individuals who are legally blind​
* Assess staff LMI knowledge compared results to pre-survey​
* Increase client capacity to independently research occupations​
* Increase OJT’S by 25% ​
* Set employer engagement objectives

## Apprenticeships

### Apprenticeship programs with Arkansas VR, Jonathan Bibb, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

#### Pre-Apprenticeship: Business Engagement and Sector Strategies for Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation and Registered Apprenticeship - Strategies for Long-Term Success:

* Effective recruitment strategies (interest, skillset, and ability)
* Educational and pre-vocational services (establish a foundation for pre-apprentices)
* Specific career and industry awareness workshops (applicants and VR staff)
* Training provided by registered apprenticeship program sponsors.
* Participants linked to local, state and national registered apprenticeship programs
* Industry recognized certifications

Example of Pre-Apprenticeship Training Schedule

Monday:

* 8:00 a.m: Registration, Participant Introductions
* 9:00 a.m.: Overview of Program, Pre-Apprenticeship Training Agreement
* 10:00 a.m.: Employer Expectations
* 11:00 a.m.: Employee Responsibilities
* noon: Lunch provided on site
* 1:00 p.m.: Team Building
* 2:00 p.m.: OSHA 10
* (3 hours)
* 5:00 p.m.: Dismissed

Tuesday:

* 8:00 a.m.: CPR Certification
* 9:00 a.m.
* 10:00 a.m.
* 11:00 a.m.
* noon: Lunch
* 1:00 p.m.; CPR Certification
* 2:00 p.m.
* 3:00 p.m.: Soft Skills Matter
* 4:00 p.m.
* 5:00 p.m.: Dismissed

Wednesday:

* 8:00 a.m.: Skills Assessment
* 9:00 a.m.
* 10:00 a.m.: Problem Solving Activities
* 11:00 a.m.
* noon: Lunch
* 1:00 p.m.: OSHA 10 (4 hours)
* 2:00 p.m.
* 3:00 p.m.
* 4:00 p.m.
* 5:00 p.m.: Dismissed

Thursday:

* 8:00 a.m.: Completing and submitting employment applications and/or resume
* 9:00 a.m.
* 10:00 a.m.: Exploring Career Opportunities
* 11:00 a.m.
* noon: Lunch
* 1:00 p.m.: OSHA 10 (3 hours)
* 2:00 p.m.
* 3:00 p.m.
* 4:00 p.m.: Dress for Success
* 5:00 p.m.: Dismissed

Friday:

* 8:00 a.m.: Real World Workplace Scenarios
* 9:00 a.m.
* 10:00 a.m.: Interview Techniques
* 11:00 a.m.: Mock Interviews
* noon: Lunch
* 1:00 p.m.: Employer Interview
* 2:00 p.m.
* 3:00 p.m.
* 4:00 p.m.: Closing Ceremony
* 5:00 p.m.: Dismissed

Coordination and provision of support services (work accommodations, job placement, tools, transportation, etc.)

### Apprenticeship Programs and Disability, Tom Hooper, Jobs for the Future, JD-VRTAC

Registered Apprenticeship: Providing workers with jobs and training since 1937

Registered Apprenticeship has a significant impact and reach.

Apprentices work in a wide range of industries such as: Construction, Manufacturing, IT, Healthcare, Transportation.

There are 530,000 Apprentices in the U.S.

Registered Apprenticeship gets results:

* Individual outcomes: $300,000 + in lifetime earning advantage
* Companies report up to 40%-50% rate of return on their Apprenticeship Programs
* Public Benefits: for every $1 invested by the government, they get $28 back

Who apprentices are:

* 6.8% of apprentices are women
* 35% of apprentices are people of color
* 7.5% of apprentices are military veterans
* The average age of an apprentice is 28 years old.

What a Registered Apprenticeship is:

* Employer/Business involvement, on-the-job training, and related instruction equal rewards for skill gain and national credential.

VR Agency Roles in Apprenticeship:

* Recruitment
* Partnership
* Funding

Challenges to helping people with disabilities access registered apprenticeship

* Lack of awareness among state VR of Registered Apprenticeship programs
* VR clients may feel college pathway careers are preferred to Registered Apprenticeship-related careers
* Engaging other state agencies involved in Registered Apprenticeship programs
* Effort to get some employers on board
* VR agencies and their partners can continue working together to overcome these challenges and use this effective strategy for VR clients

Resources:

* US Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship: <https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/>
* ExploreVR: JD-VRTAC COP – Paid Work Experiences: Internships, Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships: <http://www.explorevr.org/content/jd-vrtac-communities-practice>
* Jobs for the Future JFF’s Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning: [www.center4apprenticeship.jff.org](http://www.center4apprenticeship.jff.org)

## Internships and Business Partnerships

### USBLN Mentoring Program, Keri Gray, USBLN

#### Rising Leaders Mentoring Program – United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN)

Overview:​

* Six-month career mentoring opportunity for college students and recent graduates (rising leaders) with disabilities​
* Mentees meet and interact with business professionals in their field of study or area of interest​

2017 Demographics:​

* 125 mentoring pairs between students and professionals​
* 61 companies participating with mentors​
* 43 participating rising leaders are connected to a VR agency​

Rising Leader Recruitment Emphasis:​

* Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) majors ​
* Students/recent graduates with veteran status​
* Intersectional identity: disabled students of color and/or LGBTQ+​

Outcomes:​

* Grow the professional skills of Rising Leaders through mentorship​
* Learn about and network with USBLN corporate partners about their disability policies and employment opportunities​
* In 2016, by end of the year over half of our students had received employed. Also, almost half of students connected to VR received employment.​

Questions:​

Keri Gray, Program Manager

USBLN Rising Leaders Initiatives

[keri@usbln.org](mailto:keri@usbln.org)

[www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org)

### Pennsylvania’s Training Program with Starbucks, Ralph Roach, Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Starbucks Inclusion Academy York Roasting Plant and Distribution Center Customized Training

Partnership between: Pennsylvania OVR, Human Resources, Learning Team, ProLogistix, and Crispus Attucks

#### Aug 2015 -> 4 of 6

#### Nov 2015 -> 6 of 6

\*December 2016 Total= 19 CW/10 Perm Workers

Stages:

* Make the Business Case
* Build Your Core Team
* Develop a Plan
* Leverage Resources
* Prepare Your Company
* Interview and Hire
* Train and Evaluate
* Build on Your Successes

Action Steps:

* Kick off meeting with OVR counselors
* Source candidates for academy
* Interviewer training
* Review candidates; move to interview process
* Interviews
* Training for plant partners / CWs
* Background checks / drug screens
* Start of Inclusion Academy

##### 6-Week Curriculum

**Soft Skills Training (3 hours per day)**

* Week 1: Communication
* Week 2: Attitude and Teamwork
* Week 3: Networking
* Week 4: Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, and Professionalism
* Week 5-6: N/A

**Hard Skills Training (3 hours per day)**

* Week 1: Distribution Orientation
* Week 2: Picking and palletizing
* Week 3: Picking and palletizing
* Week 4: Picking and palletizing
* Week 5-6: Internship (Full 8 Hour Shift)

## Customized Training Programs and Partnerships

### Customized Training Partnerships with Business and the technical college system, Steve Marshall, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

#### Customized Training Leads to Careers

Ruiz Foods:

* Image of Freddie Evans and Dennis Beckley of Ruiz Foods in Florence, SC shaking hands
* Freddie supervises 266 employees, 2 production lines, 2 bakeries, 1 hot kitchen, and 1 cold kitchen. He started as a packer and worked his way to Operations Supervisor in 1 year.
* “VR set me up for success. They helped me get the training I needed through SIMT and helped me get a job at Ruiz. Ruiz Foods is a career.

Sloan Construction

* 3-week heavy equipment operation training
  + Soft skills, including company specific
  + Utilizes NCCER materials
  + Resume writing
  + Job application and interview prep
  + In-house OSHA 10 certification
  + Heavy equipment simulator
* Each trainee guaranteed an interview
* Meets Sloan Construction’s specific needs and requirements
* First female hire promoted after 2 weeks; Sloan providing additional training for her advancement

Business Process Outsourcing – BPO American

* Relationship grew from providing short-term job tryouts to long-term customized training
  + Real call center environment
  + Transferable skills
  + Provides talent pool for BPO
  + Reduces turnover
* VR clients who successfully complete the training are hired
* BPO provides inbound and outbound call center and answering services for a variety of businesses including retailers, insurance companies, and doctor’s offices

### Partnership Training Programs with VR, Melanie Hood-Wilson, Community College of Baltimore County

#### Community College of Baltimore County

Goal: Provide quality training for careers

* Develops and delivers customized training
* Trains content experts in how to instruct individuals
* Coordinates and manages internships
* Provides college credentialing
* Maintains clear and frequent communication

Outcome: Program completers with a credential

#### Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services

Goal: Provide support for employment

* Markets the customized training
* Assembles VR team for the training
* Manages the logistics
* Provides compensation and works collaboratively with the community college
* Maintains clear and frequent communication

Outcome: individuals with credentials making them more employable

**CCBC and DORS work together to provide successful career training.**

### Customized Training Partnerships with Business, Jim Evans, Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services

#### Starbucks Retail/Barista Inclusion Academy Customized Training

Partnership between: Maryland Dept. Of Rehabilitation Services, Community College of Baltimore County, Starbucks, Business Service Representatives, and the Workforce Technology Center.

Stages:

* Labor market research
* Build core team
* Develop a plan
* Leverage resources
* Prepare Starbucks and VR
* Select candidates
* Train and evaluate
* Build on successes

Action Steps:

* Kick-Off Meeting with VR Counselors
* Source candidates for academy
* Interviewer training
* BSRs and ESs conduct mock interviews
* Interviews
* Sensitivity training for in-store trainings
* Background checks
* Start of inclusion academy

6-week Curriculum

Soft Skills:

* Week 1: Communication
* Week 2: Enthusiasm and Attitude
* Week 3: Teamwork & Networking
* Week 4: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
* Week 5-6: Professionalism & Customer Service

Barista Training:

* Week 1: Starbucks Culture, Tour, & Tasting
* Week 2: Employer Expectations
* Week 3: Tour
* Week 4: Networking Event
* Week 5-6: Coffee/Machines/Chemistry/Evaluation

### Middle Skills Training Program in Healthcare, Kartik Trivedi

An Example from Nebraska

**Overview:**

Nebraska VR (NVR) has historically used innovative approaches to engage with its clients and employers. In late 2013, they started working on a middle skills certificate program in healthcare sector to train their clients. Inspired by their existing certificate programs in trades they created their first program in a non-trade sector, to address emerging needs of a few employers and in partnership with the Central Community College in Nebraska. This partnership led to the creation of Community Healthcare Worker (CHW) certificate program, which was unique at its inception.

**A Focus on Middle Skills –Why?**

* Middle skill jobs are defined as those in which the employee needs skills that are generally beyond high school but less than college.
* Nebraska historically has had very low unemployment rates
* Middle skills faces 9% skill gap
* About half of the jobs in Nebraska are defined as middle skills and about half of the job openings in Nebraska will be middle skill jobs.
* Middle skill jobs often have high wages and with a potential career ladder

**Certificate Programs in Nebraska**

* NVR partners with employers, community colleges and other public agencies to create certificate programs.
* VR clients attend a training program and complete an internship with prospective employers
* Clients who pass all the requirements receive a certificate or credentials
* VR staff brings the candidates to the employers; however, the employers select who stays in the program.
* Employers use their interview process to select the trainees.
* Businesses are involved in developing the curriculum and are connected with the instructors
* Historically, most of the programs have been in trades – Electrician Helper, Auto Tech, HVAC, Welding etc.

**The CHW Certificate Program**  
CHW Program

* Implemented in: Grand Island, Nebraska
* Partnering Community College: Central Community College, Grand Island
* Partnering Employers: St. Francis Medical Center, Good Samaritan Medical Center, Mary Lanning Medical Services, Centers for Independent Living, Health Connect ad Home and Office on Aging
* Orientation: November 2013
* Academic Program Start Date: January, 2014

Credit Courses

* Nurse Aide
* Medication Aide
* Community Health Needs
* Role of Community Healthcare Worker; Involves Internship/OJT
* Internship/OJT
* 45 hours over 8 weeks
* Start Date: June, 2014

Differences from other certificate programs

* First ever NVR program that was not in trades
* Creation of a new certificate by NVR
* Significant portion of the program involved classroom based training, to accommodate training for Nursing Aide, Medication Aide, and classes specifically designed for CHW position

Implementation

* Early on Central Community College expanded content so that if CHW jobs were not available, students had options.
* Content change had implications for VR clients as physical requirements changed; requiring ability to lift.
* The Governor chose not to expand Medicaid. The employers then did not see a financial advantage to having a CHW for which they could not bill their time. CHWs do not generate revenue but prevent costs.

**Decision Heuristics**

NVR would initiate a middle skills training if:

1. At least 5 businesses participate
2. At least 5 jobs are available
3. Community college has sufficient capacity
4. Critical number of potential candidates(≥ 5)
5. Availability of funds for a new program

**Now and the Next Steps**

**Now:**

* Developing new programs in partnership with Nebraska Methodist College in Omaha.
* Actively engaging with employers in the health sector
* Increasing the number of regional point of contacts.
* Exploring partnership opportunities with the Department of Labor within healthcare sector

**Next:**

* Develop strategies to leverage different training partners for different sectors
* Selecting between ‘credentials for a job’ and credentials for better job prospects
* Appreciating the effect of policies at the state and national level

## The Progressive Employment Model Learning Collaborative RRTC

Progressive Employment Research Findings (Progressive Employment vs. Business as usual), Susan Foley & Dennis Moore, Kelly Haines, Susan Foley, Dennis Moore, Ngai Kwan, May-Lorie St. Laurent, Demand-Side RRTC

#### Learning Collaborative Findings on Replication of Vermont Progressive Employment

**Background:**

* Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation created “Progressive Employment” in 2009
* Employer not expected to hire job seeker who is gaining experience at the site
* All costs and liabilities for the employment experience are assumed by VR
* Low risk for employer and job seeker
* Employment exposures are customized to each job seeker and site
* Employment exposure levels can be high or low dose
* High dose exposure limited to 6 weeks @ 25 hrs/week
* Comprehensive employment team with frequent meetings
* Business Account Managers = staff who have an employer-only caseload
* “Everyone is ready for something” eliminates need for “job ready”

**Research Findings and VT VR:**

* VT VR data on PE that encouraged replication
* May 2009 to July 2016, 2395 job seekers participated in PE
* 12% of all agency clients during that time (Porter, 2016)
* 29% of PE job seekers had two or more high dose PE experiences
* 44.4% of all PE job seekers were transition youth.
* most frequent primary disabilities = mental illness (39.2%), cognitive disability (35.9%) and physical/sensory disability (18.3%).
* The rehabilitation rate (successful job placement post IPE) for PE = 62% vs agency-wide 57%
* Average additional case costs for PE ~ $500/ job seeker
* 12,862 business contacts (HR managers, business owners, supervisors etc.) identified in 6,799 distinct businesses in Vermont and adjoining counties in NH, MA and NY
* Approximately 50% of successfully closed PE job seekers are hired by the employer where they had a PE experience

**Sample**

Nebraska VR

* General agency, PE called “Rapid Engagement” in NE
* Good fidelity to VT model based on fidelity instrument
* VR does job placement – no CRP for this
* 4 Business Account Managers regionally assigned
* N=700 in RE since inception

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

* General agency. good fidelity to PE based on fidelity instrument
* 5 CRPs were selected from larger list to provide PE services
* One Business Account Manager covers much of PE service area and oversees team meetings.
* N = 255 in PE since inception

Oregon Commission for the Blind –

* Blind specific agency with small core staff (~ 12 VRCs statewide)
* One BAM assigned statewide
* CRPs provide employment liaison and placement services, with agency noting that locating CRPs willing to place clients has been problematic in the past but PE has made this easier
* N = 71 since inception.

Florida Division of Blind Services

* Blind specific agency with one of largest blind specific caseloads in U.S.
* One BAM hired and several trainings conducted
* CRPs provide employment related services to clients

**Results**

PE employment exposures can be characterized as low vs high dose, where more than one day at an employment site = high dose. The two state data below demonstrate different approaches to PE.

**Nebraska breakout of employer related services under Rapid Engagement**

**Adult Experiences**

* Employer Tours-Group: 4
* Employer Tours-Individual: 3
* Informational Interview: 43
* Job Shadow: 19
* Mock Interviews-Employer: 23
* On-the-job Training: 89
* On-the-job Evaluation: 235
* Volunteer Experience: 13
* Total Adult: 459

**Youth Experiences:**

* Employer Tours-Group: 19
* Employer Tours-Individual: 32
* Informational Interview: 15
* Job Shadow: 74
* Mock Interviews-Employer: 29
* On-the-job Training: 33
* On-the-job Evaluation: 133
* Volunteer Experience: 5
* Total Youth: 340

Adult: High dose = 337 low dose = 122; 73.4% high dose - 26.6% low dose

Youth: High dose = 171 low dose = 169 ; 50.3% high dose - 49.7% low dose

* Each state has unique evaluation plan based on their record keeping, agency goals, and clientele being served by PE. No attempt was made to completely standardize data across states due to complexity of task vs available resources. Multiple Learning Collaborative meetings and teleconferences have addressed aspects of PE implementation. Considerable documentation materials and a fidelity-to-model instrument have been developed with Learning Collaborative input.

Maine breakout of employer related services under PE (all transition youth)

Youth Experiences

Company Tour: 149

Informational Interview: 86

Job Shadow: 74

Mock Interview: 13

OJT: 3

Paid Work Experience: 38

Total Experiences: 363

Total Youth: 104

104/255 youth in table

Range exposure/client 1-18

High dose = 41 Low dose = 322 11.3% high dose – 88.7% low dose

Compared to before your agency started Progressive Employment, how has the PE model changed the way you work? (July 2017)

With job seekers:

* Easier/better: NE – 21; ME – 9; OR – 8
* No change: NE – 27; ME – 11; OR – 10
* More difficult: NE – 2; ME – 2; OR – 2

With Employers:

* Easier/better: NE – 16; ME – 5; OR – 10
* No change: NE – 27; ME – 12; OR – 8
* More difficult: NE – 8; ME – 3; OR – 0

With the VR team:

* Easier/better: NE – 29; ME – 11; OR – 10
* No change: NE – 21; ME – 8; OR – 6
* More difficult: NE – 1; ME – 3; OR – 2

Not shown: CRP respondents tend to rate all categories higher than VR staff in states where CRPs are pivotal to employment. This makes sense as the model gives credit for successes to the entire team; moreover, CRPs can meet with VRCs frequently to discuss cases. The majority of respondents tend to rate the VR team as better with the PE model.

NE VR outcome data to date:

Status of participants with IPE in NE:

Adult RE (PE)

* Open Case: No 1531 ; Yes 187; Total: 1718
* Successful Outcome: No 1385 ; Yes 88; Total: 1473
* Terminated Unsuccessful: No 677 ; Yes 47; Total: 724

Youth RE (PE)

* Open Case: No 587 ; Yes 83; Total: 670
* Successful Outcome: No 161 ; Yes 23; Total: 184
* Terminated Unsuccessful: No 136 ; Yes 14; Total: 150

RE Adult: 65.19%

Non RE Adult: 67.17%

RE Youth 62.16%

Non RE Youth: 54.21%

The RE Adult successful outcome rate is expected to rise due to the longer time the case is open compared to non RE adults, combined with the relatively short time the evaluation has run.

One effect of RE (PE) appears to be the reduction of dropouts prior to IPE (plan).

Rapid Engagement Statistics

* Adult: Total – 398; Unsuccessful Prior IPE – 54
* Youth: Total – 279; Unsuccessful Prior IPE – 34

Unsuccessful % prior to IPE:

* Adult: 13.56%;
* Youth: 12.19%

Data taken from 5/5/2017 NE VR agency spreadsheet.

Discussion

* PE appears to lend itself to replication, in part because the principles are generally accepted in VR
* Employer pools willing to assist job seekers have been substantially increased due to BAM functions
* Job Placement & BAM interface with employers requires specific training for staff
* The PE model challenges some traditional approaches to job placement and employer interaction
* Agency structural conditions (e.g., CRPs, funding, policies) impact ease of replication
* PE has been found to lower VR dropout prior to plan
* Higher staff turnover and lack of employer-specific expertise in CRPs can pose challenges to the model
* Over the next several months additional data analysis will provide insight into the following:
  + Does dosage of PE impact outcomes (high vs low, total exposures)?
  + Does PE yes/no impact successful outcomes?
  + What are case-specific costs associated with delivery of the PE model?
  + What disability groups are most likely to benefit from PE?
  + What transition specific approaches appear to be effective for PE?
  + Closer analysis of fidelity to model in NE VR *vis a vis* findings
  + Long term analysis of outcomes is planned due to data collection remaining in place at sites

### Hugh Bradshaw, Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Progressive Employment in Vermont

##### Where we began:

**Many VR candidates with significant barriers**

* Corrections involvement
* Lack of skills/education
* Lack of work history
* Lack of confidence
* Employer fears
* Injury
* Under-performance
* ADA
* Impact on other workers

Placement fears

* Will it work out?
* Don’t want to “burn bridges”
* Consumer choice is challenging

##### Where we are:

**PE is now a regular part the VR process**

* Early engagement and assessment
* Skill development
* Career exploration
* Jobs!!

PE now used by CRPs: Customized employment

Instructional webinars: Archived on website

Clearly defined processes: Desk references

Documents repository

State as model employer: Disability Hiring Initiative

##### Where we're going:

**Pre-ETS for youth:**

* Work-based learning
* Refining educational goals
* Workplace readiness training
* Practice advocacy skills

**Measurable Skill Gains**

* Baseline assessment tools
* Pre-/post-experience measures
* Workplace skills acquisition
* Certifications/credentials

Careers vs. Simply a Job

Integrate with AWARE

Evidence-based model

### Libby Stone-Sterling, Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Employer Information: Looking for your next generation of workers?

[Image of two employees in a carpentry setting] Caption: Helping employers meet workforce needs.

As you look toward your next generation of workers:

* Would you like the opportunity to introduce interested young people to your business?
* Would you like to try out potential employees at no risk or cost?

If you answered YES to any of the above, the Maine Department of Labor’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) would like to tell you about a new initiative to introduce Maine youth to local career opportunities

Maine’s Progressive Employment Program meets the needs of employers and Maine youth with Disabilities by matching them to activities such as:

* Job Tours: Let youth see what your business is all about!
* Interviews: Offer a young job seeker an opportunity to practice interview skills or better yet, let them interview you to find out more about you and your business.
* Job Shadows: Invite a youth to see jobs at your business in action.
* Work Experience: Provide a work experience to help a youth gain skills with wages and workers’ compensation paid through DVR.
* On-the-job Training: Hire a young person and have some initial training costs offset.

DVR works with selected youth to identify strengths, interests, and career goals and then through contracted agencies locates employers that offer career opportunities in the young person’s field of interest. Sometimes Progressive Employment activities lead to a job offer, but there is no expectation that you do so.

### Morgan Rincon, Oregon Commission for the Blind

#### PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYMENT WORK EXPERIENCE TRAINING PROCESS​

**What steps are involved in the process?**

1. Agency refers client to Progressive Employment​
2. Agency & client identify placement options geared toward client’s skill level & interests​
3. Agency/CRP identify potential employers who could provide informational interviews, company tours, job shadow experiences, etc.
4. Agency/CRP pitch client to employer for 3-6 month agency-sponsored work experience placement​
5. Agency/CRP present work experience agreement form to employer for signature (Includes job duties, goals, objectives, VRC and client signatures)​
6. Agency/CRP provide coaching and follow- along services ​to the client
7. Agency provides employer with check-ins, Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training, etc.​

**How does this process benefit the client?**

* Builds confidence
* Strengthens work skills
* Develops resume
* Increases professional network
* Develops interpersonal and customer service skills
* Career exploration in short term placements

### Mark Shultz, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Meet you Where You Are

This model addresses the needs of Nebraska VR clients seeking employment and businesses looking for qualified applicants.

Rapid Engagement Activities:

*Business Account Managers develop partnerships with employers so that these activities can be offered:*

* Employer Mock Interviews
* On-the-Job Evaluations
* Job Shadows
* Company Tours

*Examples of individuals who might benefit from Rapid Engagement:*

* Youth and young adults
* Supported employment cases
* Individuals with psychiatric & cognitive disabilities
* Individuals with a corrections history

Employers Willing to Participate in…

* Mock interviews increased to 137 between August 2016-June 2017
* OJEs increased to 454 between August 2016-June 2017
* Job Shadows increased to 330 between August 2016-June 2017
* Company tours increased to 321 between August 2016-June 2017

Working in Nebraska (WIN) Meetings:

These are regularly scheduled meetings and it is the intent that everyone on the team attends.

Partners are invited to attend in effort to coordinate outreach to businesses.

*Meeting Agenda Topics:*

* Successes
* New Cases
* Update on Existing Cases
* Labor Market Information
* Challenging Cases
* Presentation from an Employer

## Career Pathways

### Advanced Manufacturing Supplement Career Pathways *Tish Harris, Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

#### Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities: Demand-Driven to LEEP to Success with Business

* Listen: Needed skills? Credentials valued? Demand?
* Engage: Business-designed training; Employer Advisory Boards; Tours
* Educate: Matching process; Financial incentives
* Partner: Assistive technology, universal design

Supporting Credential Training in Advanced Manufacturing, IT, and Logistics

### UpSkill/Backfill Model Career Pathways Project Janet Drudik, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Upskilling/Backfilling for Economic Self-Sufficiency

Background

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (NVR) in year 2015 received a five year RSA Career Pathway for Individuals grant. NVR’s Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP). A $3,6 million grant to provide career advancement opportunities for past successfully closed VR clients so they can achieve economic self-sufficiency and jobs with benefits.

Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP) is funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the Department of Education, grant #H235N150004.

**Goals:**

* To advance skills of existing workforce through educational advancement in designated pathways.
* To expand career opportunities for VR clients.
* To meet employer needs by developing training [programs in partnerships with businesses and training institutions.
* To provide additional services such as free ergonomic assessments.
* Provide section 503 training to businesses

**Process:**

* Identify – Look for eligible VR clients
* Support – Provide support to assist in development
* Services – Helping individuals gain necessary service and skills
* Monitor – Individuals to be monitored and provided with services throughout their education and training
* Follow-Up – CRP staff follow up with workers and employers for a minimum of 90 days

Upskill: Advancing individuals within their career pathway

Backfill: When individuals advance, the positions are backfilled with individuals wanting to enter the career pathway

Why Upskill/Backfill: To provide economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities in high-demand, high wage careers. Providing an opportunity for individuals to advance, while providing openings for individuals wanting to enter a particular career pathway.

**Sectors:**

* Started in Year 1: Information Technology; Manufacturing, Distribution, and Logistics; Manufacturing
* Started in Year 2: Construction; Healthcare

**Progress:**

* 672 Past successfully closed clients have been contacted regarding advancing in their careers
* Approximately 14% of clients want career advancement
* 27 Clients referred to 110 VR program
* Five Ergonomic assessments have been completed with businesses

**Pathways and Potential Outcomes**

Inputs/Occupation: **IT / TDL / Manufacturing / Healthcare / Construction (Point of Entry)**

**Education & Training**

Master’s/Doctoral Professional Degree

Bachelor’s Degree

Associate’s Degree

Certificate / License

High School Diploma & On-the-Job Training

**Pathway Classification (Point of Exit):**

* New Occupation
* New Industry
* [New occupation]

**Advancement Outcomes:** Increased Wages/Increased Benefits/Both

**Lessons and Next Steps**

**Lessons**

* Clients may have reservations for career advancement without the supports from VR
* Additional time needed for recruiting and career exploration for clients
* Clients may not want to advance in same career pathway or with same employer.
* Businesses not understanding the comprehensive role VR plays in business.
* Employees not aware of training reimbursements by businesses.

**Next Steps**

* Contacting past VR successfully closed clients in the healthcare and construction pathways.
* Expanding CPAP in Iowa
* Working with business to advance current employees with disabilities.
* Helping business to understand VR business services
* Use social media and/or emergency contacts to contact past clients who have outdated contact information.

### Job-Driven Career Lattices Project Ashley Kavanagh, Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Delaware Pathways Partners/Stakeholders, Government, Community/Consumers, Families

The overall goal is for all Statewide student of all abilities to select a Career Pathway based upon their skills, interests, and abilities.

Aligned Partners working with…Government:

* Delaware Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan aligns with DET, DVR, DVI, DE OOLMI
* Division of Career and Technical Education, Department of Education is leading the Pathways
* initiative NAPE partnership
* Division of Employment and Training, Department of Labor ODEP grant for One Stop liaison pending with DVR
* Department of Labor’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \*NTAC \*JDVRTAC \*WINTAC

Community Partners:

* United Way’s SPARC (web platform)
* Ability Network DE
* Pathways to Prosperity National Initiative
* Delaware Pathways

JP Morgan $2mil grant provider goals:

1. Engage stakeholders
2. Coordinate financial support
3. Integrate Education and Workforce efforts
4. Work Based Learning Experiences
5. Comprehensive Career Preparation

All Kids are included!

Delaware Technical and Community College (Statewide)

* Work-based learning intermediary
* Expand industry councils with Chambers
* Align language
* Expand certification programming

The grant with lots of Technical Assistance focused on the 5 goals works!

Marketing: Strongpoint & Rodel Foundation Annual Conference!

End Users:

* All students and youth aged 14-20
* Grades 7-14
* Special Ed Teachers
* Career Counselors
* Teachers
* School Wellness Centers

Final Goals:

* Serve all students statewide
* Vocational guide for all DVR consumers
* Employ HS Career Counselors
* Integration!

### Amanda Gerson, New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

#### Engaging Businesses through Assistive Technology: NJ CBVI’s Approach to Accessibility Awareness, Training, and Assessment, with an Eye on Successful Employment Outcomes for Consumers

Business Relations Specialist

* Business Relations Specialists speak with businesses to  introduce ideas around Assistive Technology and Accessibility; Invites AT Specialist when appropriate to further the discussion

Assistive Technology Specialist

* CBVI’s in-house Technology Services Specialists invited to provide training, consultation, demos, or accessibility assessment; Business-driven need, not for a specific consumer

Business Partner

* Goal: Businesses feel more confident interviewing and hiring individuals with vision impairments because they understand accessibility; De-mystifies how work duties can be done

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

* VRC makes a referral for consumer to receive AT Assessment and Training based on vocational goal, and facilitates the purchase of AT equipment upon employment/promise of employment

Consumer

* Ultimate goal: Consumer interviews and gets hired by an employer who understands AT as an accommodation, and takes accessibility into consideration; Both consumer and business are prepared and supported throughout transition

Technology Services Specialist:

* New Jersey CBVI staff member who specializes in Assistive Technology Services. Currently 4 staff dedicated to Vocational Rehabilitation, with 2 additional with varied special projects/responsibilities.
* Provides AT Services to consumers: Assessment of AT/IT needs and current skill level; makes recommendations for AT/IT equipment and training; Conducts consumer-specific worksite evaluation to determine accessibility and assistive technology solutions for a consumer who is employed/has promise of employment
* Provides AT Services to businesses: Demonstration and training on Assistive Technology and Accessibility; Conducts Worksite/Job/Website Accessibility Assessments in collaboration with Business and Business Relations Specialist
* Example: Collaboration with Princeton University on monthly Web Accessibility Training for Faculty, Staff, and Students
* Example: Demonstration Tables at Global Accessibility Awareness Day Events: Princeton Univ., Prudential, ETS
* Example: Accessibility Demonstration and Technology Demo Table at CBVI Business Summit

The OLD Way: Worksite/Accessibility Evaluation done only after promise of employment; Consumer-driven VR service

* RESULTING BARRIERS:
* Wait-time until AT Specialist is available
* Surprises with inaccessibility of core job functions/programs
* Delays to consumer’s ability to start work or fulfill job tasks
* Frustration by both consumer and employer
* Employer unaware of AT and Accessibility concerns

The NEW Way: Worksite/Accessibility Evaluation can ALSO be done at Business’s Request; Business AND Consumer-Driven

* RESULTING OUTCOMES:
* Scheduling can be done with putting a “rush order”
* Business  and Business Relations Specialists are aware of current level of accessibility in company and jobs
* Can better match consumers based on technology needs
* Less delays and frustrations to all parties
* Employer is educated and prepared

CBVI’s Business Services

Assistive Technology

* Collaboration and Consultation
* Accessibility Awareness – From Recruitment to Employment
* Coordination of Consumer-related Assistive Technology Services
* AT and Accessibility Resources
* Training/Education
* Accessibility Testing

Training:

* Disability Etiquette & Awareness
* Accessibility & AT
* Customized Trainings

Employment Supports:

* Time-Limited Job Coaching
* Supported/Customized Employment
* OJT
* Worksite Evaluation
* O&M

Financial Incentives

* WOTC
* Disabled Access Credit
* Barrier Removal Tax Deduction

Consultation:

* ADA
* Job Retention
* Accommodations
* Diversity Initiatives

Talent-Sourcing:

* Pre-screened Candidates
* Targeted Hiring Events
* Internships, Mentoring, Job Shadow

### Jason Clary, Oregon Commission for the Blind

#### Pre-Employment Training Cycle

1. Address Barriers to the Progressive Employment process
   1. Beginner Level Courses
      1. Adaptive devices
      2. Career exploration
      3. Communication skills
      4. Living with blindness
      5. Orientation and mobility
      6. Techniques of daily living
2. Ensure smooth transition from training to work experience
   1. Technical and O&M Training
      1. On-site task analysis and technical assessments
      2. Job development support
      3. Onsite orientation and mobility training
3. Benefits of work experience
   1. Work Experience
      1. Future work experience assessment
      2. Develop professional network
      3. Build confidence
      4. Resume building
4. Address barriers to part-time and full-time employment
   1. Advanced Level Courses
      1. Advanced technology training
      2. Advanced O&M training
      3. Advanced Braille training

### Kevin Markel, Texas Workforce Commission - Blind Services Division

#### Texas Workforce Solutions: Summer Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Regional Programs:

* WACO - Work and College Opportunities Project
* SWEEP - Summer Work Experience and Empowerment Program
* DREAM - Dallas Regional Employment Access Meet

Each Program:

* Provides comprehensive five-week residential experience​
* Collaborates with Local Education Agencies​
* Collaborates with universities​
* Provides employability and soft skills training​
* Provides self-advocacy instruction​
* Provides recreational, socialization, and networking opportunities​
* Provides for independent living and travel training​
* Provides information on post-secondary training​
* Provides instruction on the use of accessible tablets​
* Provides opportunities for career exploration​
* Collaborates with employers to provide work-based learning experiences​

Types of Assistive Technology

* Screen Reader Software
* Screen Magnification Software​
* Video Magnifiers​
* Note takers​
* iDevices or other accessible tablets​

Examples of Employers:

* Albertsons
* CVS Pharmacy
* Minyard Food Stores
* Walmart

Contact:

* Kevin Markel, M.S., C.R.C.​, Transition Program Specialist​, Texas Workforce Commission Blind Services Division​
* Email: [kevin.markel@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:kevin.markel@twc.state.tx.us)​
* Phone: (817) 759-3514