EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT CORE COMPETENCIES FOR VR PROFESSIONALS

This framework specifies the employer engagement competencies involved in vocational rehabilitation (VR) dual-customer models.

These domains and associated competencies are the skills that align the VR workforce system with the dual needs of job seekers with disabilities and business/employer partners:

Domain 1: Foundational Competencies

Baseline skills from which all other competencies are built

Dual-Customer Philosophy Awareness	• A firm understanding of the dual-customer approach and how it benefits both the business customers and job seekers with disabilities • Ability to recognize and incorporate the relative perspectives of both parties
Disability Awareness and Equitable Employment Practices	• Deep understanding of disability culture, accessibility standards, and equitable recruitment and hiring practices
VR Program Knowledge	• In-depth comprehension of VR services, policies, funding mechanisms, and person-centered practices
Labor Market Intelligence (LMI)	• Ability to acquire labor market information, interpret labor market trends, and apply data to inform business outreach strategies
Language/ Communication Competence	• Ability to gauge and use business-friendly language and communication techniques appropriate to the discussion and audience

ExploreVR
INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

For additional information:

Julisa Cully | Julisa.Cully@umb.edu • Mary DiBiase | Mary.Dibiase@umb.edu

www.ExploreVR.org

The Innovative Guided Rehabilitation Employer Engagement Training (iGREET) is a project of ExploreVR at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston. ExploreVR offers VR agencies easy and convenient access to a range of VR research, related data, training and tools for planning, evaluation, and decision-making. The contents of iGREET were developed under grant # H263G250025 from the U.S. Department of Education. The Department does not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described or discussed in this document. The contents of this presentation may contain examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by another public or private organization. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. This content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department. This publication is not intended to represent the views or policy of or be an endorsement of any views expressed or materials provided by any Federal agency. (EDGAR 75.620)

Domain 2: Relationship Management Competencies

Focus on building, sustaining, and growing partnerships with businesses

Effective, Strategic Communication	• Ability to adapt language use based on the context and audience to maximize the audience's understanding and interest • Ability to describe value propositions to employers clearly and professionally
Trust and Credibility Building	• Ability to convey and demonstrate reliability and consistency to build strong employer relationships
Customer-Centered Engagement	• Ability to balance and communicate the needs and perspectives of both the business and the VR client
Business Acumen	• In-depth understanding of employer operations, workforce needs, and industry-specific hiring practices • Ability to incorporate individual business and industry changes into your understanding, as needed
Consistent and Proactive Communication	• Ability to identify the business's communication preferences and develop a consistent approach for communicating relevant information and checking in on needs and priorities

Domain 3: Service Delivery Competencies

Aligning employer needs with workforce system talent pipelines

Individualized Workforce	• Ability to use, design, and deliver services that meet specific business needs (e.g., job matching, disability awareness training, and accommodations consulting)
Accessing and Coordinating with WIOA Partners to Address Business Needs	• Ability to incorporate workforce partners into business communication and services to meet the needs of the dual customers
Talent Pipeline Development	• Ability to coordinate exposure, training, and placement strategies to align VR and other workforce talent with employer needs and requirements
Problem-Solving and Mediation	• Ability to navigate workplace issues involving VR clients (e.g., conflict resolution, performance support)
Follow-Through and Feedback Loop	• Ability to provide post-service (training, consultation, and/or placement) support and collect feedback for continuous improvement

Domain 4: Systems-Level Competencies

Broadly coordinating, collaborating, and using data beyond that of the internal agency

Cross-System (Intra-agency) Collaboration	• Ability to coordinate with workforce partners (e.g., American Job Centers, WIOA partners, community workforce partners) to integrate services and share resources toward common goals and initiatives
Inter-agency Collaboration	• Understanding of and ability to use the makeup, opportunities, and goals within the intra-agency structure and staffing model, and ability to determine and use LMI and other data- sharing opportunities
Data-Informed Decision Making	• Understanding of how to access and use available outcome metrics, employer satisfaction data, and labor analytics to refine engagement strategies
Program Innovation	• Ability to adapt and customize practices and services based on evolving business and community needs and economic changes
Policy Advocacy and Compliance	• Ability to navigate and advocate within policy frameworks affecting business and disability employment (e.g., Section 503 of the Rehab Act)

Domain 5: Ethical & Professional Competencies

Aligning business engagement practices with codes of professional and ethical conduct, including the CRC Code of Professional Ethics

Ethical Practice and Confidentiality	• Ability to uphold VR ethics and ensure client and employer information is treated with respect and discretion
Continuous Professional Development	• Commitment to ongoing professional development in both career seeker and business engagement
Maintaining Agency Priorities	• Ability to act as a dual-customer advocate, ensuring mutual benefit and sustainable employment outcomes, and avoiding conflicts of interest