

2011

36th
Institute on
Rehabilitation Issues

**The State Rehabilitation Council-
Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership**



36th IRI

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues

**The State Rehabilitation
Council–
Vocational Rehabilitation
Partnership:
Working Together Works**

**Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education**

**The Council of State Administrators of Vocational
Rehabilitation**

**The George Washington University
Technical Assistance and Continuing Education
Center**

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McGuire-Kuletz, M., Tomlinson, P., & Siblo, M. (2010). *The State Rehabilitation Council–vocational rehabilitation partnership: Working together works* (Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Monograph No. 36). Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center.

The contents of this IRI document were developed under a grant (H264C090004) from the U.S. Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded to The George Washington University. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of those agencies, and endorsement by the federal government or the university should not be assumed.

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Preface

This document is intended to facilitate strong partnerships between State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) and state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies consistent with the principles articulated in Section 100(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the Act). This publication provides guidance and support to states as they partner in a mutually beneficial manner on behalf of people with disabilities. The partnership described in the Act is unique and calls upon SRCs and VR to jointly conduct business with the primary focus of successful employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The wonderful challenge is to blend the sharing of responsibility with the talent of the partners who come to the table.

Fortunately for individuals with disabilities in the United States, crafters of the Act as amended in 1992 identified a significant need for SRCs and VR to contribute equally in the accomplishment of certain tasks. The intent of the partnership—to share responsibility for the development of specific products and outcomes while advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities—is critical to ensure full inclusion in employment and integration into society for people with disabilities.

The SRC-VR partnership includes several key required activities and demands a spirit of respect and collaboration. Such central activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Developing, agreeing to, and reviewing an annual VR state plan, including updates and attachments
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the VR program and services for people with all disabilities, including those with cultural and linguistic differences
- Reviewing and analyzing consumer satisfaction with VR services and service providers
- Writing an SRC annual report
- Examining agency policy, procedures, and performance
- Selecting impartial hearing officers and mediators

- Partnering in comprehensive statewide needs assessment development
- Developing resource plans
- RSA’s monitoring protocol includes soliciting input from the SRC as the VR agency’s partner in the VR program and includes having SRC representation at the entrance and exit conferences as well as at other sessions as appropriate.

All of these activities have a major impact on the ability of VR to accomplish its primary objectives as outlined in the law.

Definition of Partnership

To proceed with building solid partnerships between the SRCs and VR, consideration of the definition of partnership is in order. Depending on the definition used by business, the arts, or human services, “partnership” refers to a business or organization where two or more individuals share equal responsibility for the management of profits and losses. Words like “cooperation” and “collaboration” are often used when defining partnership. Synonyms include “relationship,” “connection,” “association,” and “link.” The WordNet project housed in the Department of Computer Science at Princeton University defines partnership as a “cooperative relationship between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving some specific goal or as a contract between two or more persons who agree to pool talent and money and share profits and losses.” “Cooperative,” “relationship,” “agree,” “share,” “responsibility,” “achieving,” “specific goals,” “contract,” “talent,” “management,” and “sharing of profits and losses” are all key words or phrases defining one thing—partnership.

The SRC-VR partnership is only as strong as the relationship that exists between the SRC chair and VR director, who set the tone for the full membership and staff.

The Consumer Voice

SRCs are the consumer voice for the VR program. Federally mandated membership requirements include a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that various constituencies have a

voice in the conduct of the VR agency. This consumer voice is absolutely necessary for the VR program to partner with individuals with disabilities to *jointly* facilitate the accomplishment of their dreams of independence, full community integration, and employment.

SRC members represent the state agency to a broad array of partners such as employers, parents, educators, community rehabilitation programs, and other stakeholders in the VR program. They reinforce the value that individuals with disabilities are able to achieve quality employment outcomes and become contributing members of society.

Though mandated by federal law, the partnership between SRCs and VR extends beyond the shared accomplishment of mandated tasks. Specifically, the partnership is a call to action to advocate for and to hear the voices of the people served by VR. The partnership must be a commitment and priority for the partners in order to make the VR system a change agent whose goal is to assist people with disabilities to become employed in integrated, competitive employment!

The authors of this publication hope that you will find information and tools to help your state develop and maintain strong partnerships between the SRC and VR to fully implement the spirit of the law. As you read, we are sure you will find that the SRC-VR partnership demonstrates that working together works!

How to Use This IRI Publication

The organization of this particular IRI publication is intended to provide maximum flexibility to the reader. The text is designed for SRC members, VR staff, and other stakeholders such as individuals with disabilities and community rehabilitation providers. Though the full monograph may be used in its entirety for training purposes, each chapter is crafted to be used independently of the rest of the document as needed. Additionally, several appendices include examples of SRC bylaws, handbooks, and major VR program policy guidance.

Continuing Education Credit

Certified rehabilitation counselors are encouraged to use this 36th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues as a self-study course to obtain continuing education credit. Those interested in earning credit should study the questions at the end of each chapter and take the online examination located at <http://iriforum.org/onlinecrc.aspx>. There is a \$25 registration fee to take the exam. Previous IRIs and online examinations are available at www.iriforum.org.

Chapter 1: History and Law

Legislative History of Vocational Rehabilitation

In discussing the importance of State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs), how they evolved, and their relationship to the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, it is important to review the legislative history that created and expanded the SRC's role to its current form. A review of the major legislation that improved the public VR program clearly reveals Congress's intent over the years to more meaningfully involve individuals with disabilities and the rehabilitation community in partnership with VR.

The following listing illustrates the legislative progression of the public VR program:

- **1918:** The Soldier's Rehabilitation Act was established for rehabilitation of returning veterans.
- **1920:** The Smith-Fess Act was created to provide a program of rehabilitation for citizens with disabilities. It was strengthened by the success of the Soldier's Rehabilitation Act of 1918.
- **1930:** Public Law 317 extended the civilian VR act for an additional 3 years. It required states to match federal funds.
- **1935:** The state-federal program of VR was strengthened and extended. Congress was now authorized to support VR as a continuous program. The National Rehabilitation Association played a major role in this legislation.
- **1936:** The Randolph-Sheppard Act was authorized and required states to license qualified personnel who are blind to operate vending stands in federal buildings or federally sponsored buildings.
- **1938:** The Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act was passed, requiring all federal agencies to purchase specified supplies and

services from nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other significant disabilities. It was amended in 1971 to become the AbilityOne Program.

- **1943:** In Public Law 113, the 78th Congress authorized major amendments to broaden the VR program. For the first time, medical, surgical, and other physical restoration services were authorized, and persons with mental health conditions and cognitive or other intellectual disabilities were eligible to apply for services. The amendments allowed states to split rehabilitation for the blind from general agencies and establish separate blind agencies.
- **1954:** The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1954, Public Law 565, typified the people-oriented character of the rehabilitation movement. The provisions of the new law were clearly intended to bring the public and voluntary agencies into a closer working alliance.
- **1965:** Extended evaluation was introduced to determine eligibility. The National Commission on Architectural Barriers to Rehabilitation of the Handicapped was established.
- **1973:** The Rehabilitation Act was comprehensively rewritten, with priority placed on services for individuals with severe disabilities. The individualized written rehabilitation program was created, which was intended to make the client a full partner in the rehabilitation process. Title V, the protection for certain civil rights for people with disabilities, was established. The Client Assistance Program was established.
- **1978:** The national independent living program was established.
- **1986:** Supported employment and rehabilitation engineering were added as services.
- **1992:** Consumer-controlled Statewide Rehabilitation Advisory Councils and State Independent Living Councils were established. Consumer choice was emphasized. The eligibility requirements were changed, requiring the VR agency to demonstrate that an individual could not benefit from VR services before determining ineligibility.

Consumer participation in the individualized written rehabilitation program was strengthened.

- **1998:** The public VR program became Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. “State Rehabilitation Advisory Councils” were changed to “State Rehabilitation Councils.” The informed consumer choice mandate was strengthened. “Individualized written rehabilitation program” was changed to “individualized plan for employment.” A mediation option was added to the appeal process. Interagency agreements with higher education were mandated.

The 1992 Amendments and SRCs

When the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act amendments was being considered by the 102nd Congress in 1992, the call for more involvement by individuals with disabilities in the VR program was intensifying. Because disability rights advocates had begun to find their voice through a new and active role in the fashioning of the 1986 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, this activism helped to enhance the message that any changes to the 72-year-old statute should be done with individuals with disabilities “at the table.”

The concepts of consumer control and empowerment were brought forth in the 1992 amendments in various ways throughout the reauthorization process. As Representative Major Owens (D-NY) stated during that body’s final consideration of the Conference Committee’s Report on H.R. 5482, “I am pleased that the House and Senate have reached agreement on the issues addressed by this bill. H.R. 5482 creates partnerships between providers and consumers to ensure a more consumer driven system” (Congressional Record, 1992a).

Senator David Durenberger (R-MN), ranking minority member of the Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy, commented during the Senate debate:

In this reauthorization, we have done all that was possible to continue to widen the door and expand opportunities for consumers. Some of the major accomplishments include: A revision of the act that ensures the concepts of empowerment for

individuals with disabilities will be followed, including respect for individual dignity, self-determination, inclusion, integration, and full participation of individuals with disabilities; . . . the establishment of a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the basic grant program, a majority of whose members shall be persons with disabilities. (Congressional Record, 1992b)

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate included in their respective bills (H.R. 5482 and S. 3065) the requirement that the state VR plan include an assurance that each state VR agency establish a state advisory committee. The House bill referred to the newly created entity as the Rehabilitation Consumer and Business Advisory Council, and the Senate amendment called it the State Rehabilitation Advisory Committee. The Committee of Conference Report accepted the Senate's language.

The 1998 Amendments and SRCs

Consumer empowerment and the SRC's role in partnering with VR were recognized and considerably strengthened in the 1998 amendments, as evidenced by the following excerpts from a Senate committee report.

The committee recognizes the need for the disability community in a State to play a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively. Therefore, the committee, in several respects, significantly strengthens the role of the State Rehabilitation Council (formerly named the State Rehabilitation Advisory Council) in developing policies, planning activities, evaluating program effectiveness, and carrying out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program. The committee bill requires that the Council, in conjunction with the State vocational rehabilitation agency, jointly conduct the comprehensive needs assessment of individuals with disabilities in the State, develop (and agree to) the State's annual goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation program, and evaluate the State's performance relative to its goals on an annual basis. Additional sections of the S. 1579, including sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act, build upon the existing Council role by specifying its broad responsibilities to assist the State vocational rehabilitation agency in, for example, developing all portions of the State plan

and amendments thereto, as well as policies, procedures, and reports related to the vocational rehabilitation program. Through the bill the committee recognizes that the Council's role in some States is not purely advisory and in other States is evolving to reflect a true partnership between the Council and the State vocational rehabilitation agency in ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services. (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1998, p. 17)

The Committee of Conference Report included a grandfathering clause for states that already had a "consumer controlled independent commission." Such states were allowed to retain those structures rather than establish a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council as required by the legislation. The following agencies were grandfathered under this clause¹:

- Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Iowa Department for the Blind
- Michigan Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- New Mexico Commission for the Blind
- Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission
- Oregon Commission for the Blind
- South Carolina Commission for the Blind
- South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

The committee made selected amendments to provisions affecting SRCs. Regarding council membership, the committee

- Added at least one representative from the statewide workforce investment partnership, a representative from a project funded under section 121 (American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (AIVRS), if funded by the state), and a representative of the state educational agency responsible for the education of students with disabilities under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

¹These state agencies were exempted from the provision, as a result of an agreement between Senator DeWine (R-OH), Senator Thurmond (R-SC), Senator Kennedy (D-MA), and Senator Wellstone (D-MN), because these state VR agencies were independent commissions that were consumer controlled and that were undertaking the functions of the SRC as defined in Section 105.

- Allowed a council to have fewer than 15 members if it was in existence prior to the 1992 amendments to the Act
- Clarified that the director of the VR agency was a nonvoting member of the council
- Added a requirement that the appointing authority, to the greatest extent practicable, consider the extent to which minority populations were represented on the council
- Allowed the governor to delegate to the council the authority to fill vacancies on the council
- Removed the time limit on appointments for certain council members

In adding clarifications concerning council membership, the committee amendments specified that the representative of the Client Assistance Program and, if the state had one, the representative from the Native American Project funded under part C were excepted from the prohibition against council members serving more than two consecutive terms. This clarification was made in recognition of the limited size of the staff associated with many such programs and projects and the value of continuity in representation given the unique functions of these programs and projects. The committee was urged to assign the same exception status to the director of a state's parent information and training center, but declined this request. Such centers have employees, sponsors, parents assisted by the center, and volunteers, most of whom are parents or strong advocates for children with disabilities. By requiring parent centers to rotate their representatives on the SRC, as is required of most council members, the committee intended for such rotation to bring vitality and diversity to the council with regard to the needs of children with disabilities who may someday need VR services.

Regarding council functions, the committee amended the current law by (a) clarifying that the council should analyze and advise the VR agency regarding its performance in helping individuals with disabilities achieve employment outcomes; (b) specifying that, in partnership with the VR agency, the council should develop and review state goals and priorities, evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program, and submit reports of progress to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration; (c) clarifying that the council should advise the VR agency

regarding authorized activities and assist in the preparation of the state plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations; (d) simplifying the scope of the council's analysis of the state VR program's effectiveness and consumer satisfaction with the state VR program and requiring the council to address individuals' employment outcomes and the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes; and (e) clarifying the council's functions related to coordination with other entities. The committee intended these amendments to further its goal of creating a consumer-oriented and consumer-driven VR system (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1998, p. 26).

The finalized 1998 amendments focused on the growing population of Americans with disabilities, their disadvantaged status, and the goal of providing tools to them to achieve equality of opportunity, full inclusion and integration in society, employment, independent living, and economic and social self-sufficiency. The findings, purposes, and policy of the overall Act are stated in the legislation Section 100(a) as follows:

Findings

Congress finds that—

- (1) millions of Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities and the number of Americans with such disabilities is increasing;
- (2) individuals with disabilities constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in society;
- (3) disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to—
 - (A) live independently;
 - (B) enjoy self-determination;
 - (C) make choices;
 - (D) contribute to society;
 - (E) pursue meaningful careers; and
 - (F) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society;
- (4) increased employment of individuals with disabilities can be achieved through implementation of statewide workforce investment systems under title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that provide meaningful and

effective participation for individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities and activities carried out under the vocational rehabilitation program established under title I, and through the provision of independent living services, support services, and meaningful opportunities for employment in integrated work settings through the provision of reasonable accommodations;

- (5) individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination in such critical areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting, and public services; and
- (6) the goals of the Nation properly include the goal of providing individuals with disabilities with the tools necessary to—
 - (A) make informed choices and decisions; and
 - (B) achieve equality of opportunity, full inclusion and integration in society, employment, independent living, and economic and social self-sufficiency, for such individuals.

Purpose

- (1) to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through—
 - (A) statewide workforce investment systems implemented in accordance with title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that include, as integral components, comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs of vocational rehabilitation;
 - (B) independent living centers and services;
 - (C) research;
 - (D) training;
 - (E) demonstration projects; and
 - (F) the guarantee of equal opportunity; and
- (2) to ensure that the Federal Government plays a leadership role in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with significant disabilities, and in assisting States and providers of services in fulfilling the aspirations of such individuals with disabilities for meaningful and gainful employment and independent living.

Policy

- (1) respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on informed choice, of individuals with disabilities;
- (2) respect for the privacy, rights, and equal access (including the use of accessible formats), of the individuals;
- (3) inclusion, integration, and full participation of the individuals;
- (4) support for the involvement of an individual's representative if an individual with a disability requests, desires, or needs such support; and
- (5) support for individual and systemic advocacy and community involvement.

Title I Principles

Title I of the Act lists principles that the VR agencies must adhere to as they assess, plan, develop, and provide VR services to people with disabilities to achieve employment. These seven principles lay the foundation for how the public VR system works:

1. People with disabilities are presumed to be capable of work.
2. Employment opportunities should be in an integrated setting.
3. Consumers should have active participation and full partnership in the VR process.
4. Families and natural supports are important in the VR process.
5. The system must have qualified counselors, staff, and providers.
6. Consumers should have full participation and involvement with policy development and implementation.
7. Agencies must use accountability measures to facilitate program goals and objectives.

Considering Congress's findings and its establishment of the foregoing guiding principles, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, was the monumental legislation that transformed the VR system from a medical model to a system requiring meaningful participation of the consumer in decision making and

policy development and mandating the consumer-counselor partnership.

SRC Composition and Functions as Outlined in Section 105

The 1998 amendments changed the State Rehabilitation Advisory Council to the State Rehabilitation Council by removing the word “Advisory,” with the specific intent of emphasizing the partnership role of the council with the state VR agency.

Section 105 within Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1998, mandates the SRC and defines its composition and functions. The text of Section 105 follows.²

(a) Establishment

(1) In general

Except as provided in section 101(a)(21)(A)(i), to be eligible to receive financial assistance under this title a State shall establish a State Rehabilitation Council (referred to in this section as the “Council”) in accordance with this section.

(2) Separate agency for individuals who are blind

A State that designates a State agency to administer the part of the State plan under which vocational rehabilitation services are provided for individuals who are blind under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) may establish a separate Council in accordance with this section to perform the duties of such a Council with respect to such State agency.

(b) Composition and Appointment

(1) Composition

(A) In general. Except in the case of a separate Council established under subsection (a)(2), the Council shall be composed of—

- (i)** at least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, which representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the Council;

²The Department of Education regulations implementing Section 105 through 34 CFR, 361.17, can be found in Appendix C.

- (ii) at least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 671 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (iii) at least one representative of the client assistance program established under section 112;
- (iv) at least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if the counselor is an employee of the designated State agency;
- (v) at least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;
- (vi) four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
- (vii) representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of—
 - (I) individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and
 - (II) individuals' representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;
- (viii) current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
- (ix) in a State in which one or more projects are carried out under section 121, at least one representative of the directors of the projects;
- (x) at least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this title and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
- (xi) at least one representative of the State workforce investment board.

(B) Separate council

In the case of a separate Council established under subsection (a)(2), the Council shall be composed of—

- (i) at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(i);
- (ii) at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(ii);

- (iii)** at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(iii);
- (iv)** at least one vocational rehabilitation counselor described in subparagraph (A)(iv), who shall serve as described in such subparagraph;
- (v)** at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(v);
- (vi)** four representatives described in subparagraph (A)(vi);
- (vii)** at least one representative of a disability advocacy group representing individuals who are blind;
- (viii)** at least one individual's representative, of an individual who—
 - (I)** is an individual who is blind and has multiple disabilities; and
 - (II)** has difficulty in representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself;
- (ix)** applicants or recipients described in subparagraph (A)(viii);
- (x)** in a State described in subparagraph (A)(ix), at least one representative described in such subparagraph;
- (xi)** at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(x); and
- (xii)** at least one representative described in subparagraph (A)(xi).

(C) Exception

In the case of a separate Council established under subsection (a)(2), any Council that is required by State law, as in effect on the date of enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, to have fewer than 15 members shall be deemed to be in compliance with subparagraph (B) if the Council—

- (i)** meets the requirements of subparagraph (B), other than the requirements of clauses (vi) and (ix) of such subparagraph; and
- (ii)** includes at least—
 - (I)** one representative described in subparagraph (B)(vi); and
 - (II)** one applicant or recipient described in subparagraph (B)(ix).

(2) Ex officio member

The Director of the designated State unit shall be an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.

(3) Appointment

Members of the Council shall be appointed by the Governor or, in the case of a State that, under State law, vests authority for the administration of the activities carried out under this Act in an entity other than the Governor (such as one or more houses of the State legislature or an independent board), the chief officer of that entity. The appointing authority shall select members after soliciting recommendations from representatives of organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities and organizations interested in individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the appointing authority shall consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the Council.

(4) Qualifications

(A) In general

A majority of Council members shall be persons who are—

- (i) individuals with disabilities described in section 7(20)(B); and
- (ii) not employed by the designated State unit.

(B) Separate council

In the case of a separate Council established under subsection (a)(2), a majority of Council members shall be persons who are—

- (i) blind; and
- (ii) not employed by the designated State unit.

(5) Chairperson

(A) In general

Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Council shall select a chairperson from among the membership of the Council.

(B) Designation by chief executive officer

In States in which the chief executive officer does not have veto power pursuant to State law, the appointing authority described in paragraph (3) shall designate a member of the Council to serve as the chairperson of the Council or shall require the Council to so designate such a member.

(6) Terms of appointment

(A) Length of term

Each member of the Council shall serve for a term of not more than 3 years, except that—

- (i) a member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which a predecessor was appointed, shall be appointed for the remainder of such term; and
- (ii) the terms of service of the members initially appointed shall be (as specified by the appointing authority described in paragraph (3)) for such fewer number of years as will provide for the expiration of terms on a staggered basis.

(B) Number of terms

No member of the Council, other than a representative described in clause (iii) or (ix) of paragraph (1)(A), or clause (iii) or (x) of paragraph (1)(B), may serve more than two consecutive full terms.

(7) Vacancies

(A) In general

Except as provided in subparagraph (B), any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Council shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. The vacancy shall not affect the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the Council.

(B) Delegation

The appointing authority described in paragraph (3) may delegate the authority to fill such a vacancy to the remaining members of the Council after making the original appointment.

(C) Functions of Council

The Council shall, after consulting with the State workforce investment board—

- (1)** review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the unit under this title, particularly responsibilities relating to—
 - (A)** eligibility (including order of selection);
 - (B)** the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
 - (C)** functions performed by State agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this title;
- (2)** in partnership with the designated State unit—
 - (A)** develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(C); and
 - (B)** evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(E);
- (3)** advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this title, and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this title;
- (4)** to the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—
 - (A)** the functions performed by the designated State agency;
 - (B)** vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act; and
 - (C)** employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes;

- (5) prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public;
- (6) to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(20) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities established under section 125 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, the State mental health planning council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x-4(a)), and the State workforce investment board;
- (7) provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and
- (8) perform such other functions, consistent with the purpose of this title, as the State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

(D) Resources

(1) Plan

The Council shall prepare, in conjunction with the designated State unit, a plan for the provision of such resources, including such staff and other personnel, as may be necessary and sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council under this section. The resource plan shall, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan.

(2) Resolution of disagreements

To the extent that there is a disagreement between the Council and the designated State unit in regard to

the resources necessary to carry out the functions of the Council as set forth in this section, the disagreement shall be resolved by the Governor consistent with paragraph (1).

(3) Supervision and evaluation

Each Council shall, consistent with State law, supervise and evaluate such staff and other personnel as may be necessary to carry out its functions under this section.

(4) Personnel conflict of interest

While assisting the Council in carrying out its duties, staff and other personnel shall not be assigned duties by the designated State unit or any other agency or office of the State, that would create a conflict of interest.

(E) Conflict of Interest

No member of the Council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under State law.

(F) Meetings

The Council shall convene at least 4 meetings a year in such places as it determines to be necessary to conduct Council business and conduct such forums or hearings as the Council considers appropriate. The meetings, hearings, and forums shall be publicly announced. The meetings shall be open and accessible to the general public unless there is a valid reason for an executive session.

(G) Compensation and Expenses

The Council may use funds allocated to the Council by the designated State unit under this title (except for funds appropriated to carry out the client assistance program under section 112 and funds reserved pursuant to section 110(c) to carry out part C) to reimburse members of the Council for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care and personal assistance services), and to pay compensation to a member of the Council, if such member is not employed

or must forfeit wages from other employment, for each day the member is engaged in performing the duties of the Council.

(H) Hearings and Forums

The Council is authorized to hold such hearings and forums as the Council may determine to be necessary to carry out the duties of the Council.

Other SRC Mandates from Title I

Throughout Title I, there are mandates for the state VR agency in reference to the SRC that parallel Section 105 as illustrated below:

- **Section 7(16):** SRC members cannot serve as an impartial hearing officer.
- **Section 101(a)(15)(9A)(i–iii):** Every 3 years, VR and SRCs must jointly conduct a comprehensive needs assessment including the following elements:
 - Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities (including their need for supported employment); minorities; those who have been unserved or underserved by VR; those who are served under other components of the Workforce Investment System.
 - The need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs.
- **Section 101(a)(15)(C)(i–iii):** SRC and VR must jointly develop, agree to, and annually review the VR state plan goals and objectives.
- **Section 101(a)(15)(E)(i):** SRC and VR must submit an annual joint report to the commissioner on the effectiveness of the VR program; the progress made in improving from the previous year; the extent to which goals were achieved, with strategies contributing to goal achievement and factors that impeded success; and the assessment of performance on standards and indicators.

- **Section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii):** The state plan must provide for the following:
 - VR has an SRC that meets regularly.
 - With the SRC, VR develops, agrees to, and reviews VR goals and priorities annually and submits annual progress reports.
 - VR regularly consults with the SRC on development, implementation, and revision of VR policies and procedures.
 - VR includes in the state plan a summary of SRC input; recommendations from the SRC annual report; a review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other reports prepared by the SRC; and a response to SRC input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting input or recommendations. In addition, VR transmits to the SRC all plans, reports, and other information on policies, practices, and procedures, as well as copies of due process hearings.
- **Section 101(a)(21)(B):** If the state has separate agencies for “general” and “blind,” it may have one council or two councils.
- **Section 102(c)(8)(C)(d):** VR, in consultation with the SRC, must develop and implement written policies and procedures to enable each applicant to exercise informed choice throughout the VR process.
- **Section 107(a)(2)(G); (4)(C); (5):** In monitoring and reviewing VR, the commissioner shall consider information provided by the SRC under Section 105; conduct meetings with the SRC; examine areas identified by the public or through the SRC; and report on findings of the annual review or on onsite monitoring available to the SRC.

Conclusion

Through, the amendments of 1992 and 1998 Congress provided for greater consumer partnership. In particular, the 1998 amendments clearly stated the findings of Congress and defined the principles of the Rehabilitation Act and the principles for the conduct of business of Title I of the Act. The 1992 and 1998

amendments solidified the intent of Congress to involve consumers and the rehabilitation community as full partners in the public VR program.

References

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- Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, Pub. L. No. 102-569 §503 (b), 29, U.S.C. §791(g) et seq. (1994).
- Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. (1998, March 2). *Report 105-166*.
- Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Pub. L. No. 105-220, 112 Stat. 936 (1998).

Study Questions

1. In what year was the first program of rehabilitation for disabled citizens enacted?
 - a. 1936—The Randolph-Sheppard Act
 - b. 1954—The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1954
 - c. 1920—The Smith-Fess Act
 - d. 1998—The Workforce Investment Act

2. In what year did the function and duties of the State Rehabilitation Advisory Councils change from advising the state VR agency to partnering with the state VR agency?
 - a. 1920
 - b. 1992
 - c. 1998
 - d. 1972

3. The SRC and the state VR agency must jointly develop, agree to, and annually review the VR state plan goals and objectives.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. The chair of the SRC is selected by
 - a. The state VR director
 - b. The commissioner of the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration
 - c. The governor
 - d. The SRC membership

5. Except for the Client Assistance Program and section 121 representatives, what is the maximum number of terms a member of the SRC can serve?
 - a. One 3-year term
 - b. Three consecutive 2-year terms
 - c. Two consecutive 3-year terms
 - d. One 2-year term

6. The requirements for the composition and appointment of the SRC are found in
 - a. Section 107 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments
 - b. Section 110 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments
 - c. Section 102 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments
 - d. Section 105 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments

7. Which of the following is NOT one of the five principles of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendments?
 - a. Respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on informed choice of individuals with disabilities
 - b. Respect for privacy rights and equal access (including the use of accessible formats) of the individuals
 - c. Inclusion, integration, and full participation of individuals
 - d. Right to vote in all federal elections

8. Which individual on the SRC is an ex officio, nonvoting member?
 - a. Representative of the governor's office
 - b. Representative of the Client Assistance Program
 - c. State VR agency director
 - d. State SRC liaison

9. The Rehabilitation Act amendments set forth the composition of the SRC. Which of the following is not required to sit on the SRC?
 - a. Four representatives from business, industry, and labor
 - b. Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, VR services
 - c. At least one representative from community rehabilitation service providers
 - d. Former director of the state VR agency

10. The Rehabilitation Act requires that the SRC meet no less than
 - a. Six times per year
 - b. Two times per year
 - c. Four times per year
 - d. Five times per year

Chapter 2: SRC Basics

This chapter provides the foundation for how State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) came into existence, based on the legal responsibilities detailed in chapter 1. The Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1992 (the Act) provides SRC membership requirements through passages about composition, the appointment process, and terms of service. The leadership of each SRC greatly benefits by fully understanding these topics. This knowledge base adds significant value to the SRCs as they work toward achieving their federal mandates, since the leaders can be aware of pending vacancies due to term limits, areas of focus for recruitment, and ways to utilize the talents of each member in operationalizing the council's work plan.

Composition

Each SRC is expected to be the “consumer voice,” and the statutory composition brings together important constituencies as detailed in Section 105 through 34 CFR (361.17) of the Rehabilitation Act (see chapter 1):

(1) Composition

- (A) In general.** Except in the case of a separate Council established under subsection (a)(2), the Council shall be composed of—
- (i)** at least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, which representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the Council;
 - (ii)** at least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 671 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

- (iii) at least one representative of the client assistance program established under section 112;
- (iv) at least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if the counselor is an employee of the designated State agency;
- (v) at least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;
- (vi) four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
- (vii) representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of—
 - (I) individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and
 - (II) individuals' representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;
- (viii) current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
- (ix) in a State in which one or more projects are carried out under section 121, at least one representative of the directors of the projects;
- (x) at least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this title and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and
- (xi) at least one representative of the State workforce investment board. . . .

(2) Ex officio member

The Director of the designated State unit shall be an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.

SRC membership categories detailed in the Act should result in a population of at least 16 members (15 voting and 1 ex officio). One SRC created a membership composition mandates chart to track the federal requirements for each member category (see Appendix E, Section 7). This document assists the executive committee in succession planning and the focus needed for recruitment of new members. SRCs have reported a wide variance

in the size of their membership, from 16 to 32, with some states having as many as 14 ex officio members. Based on a survey conducted by the IRI Primary Study Group, the average membership size seems to be under 20. Although the SRC may not be in a situation to change the membership of its council, the provisions in the Act describe requirements to ensure that the SRC functions according to a group process. Diversity of membership was established to ensure that as the SRC works to review, analyze, and advise the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system, a plethora of opinions and knowledge about the VR system is present to ensure a broader perspective. At the same time, the challenge from this diversity in membership presents itself in keeping individual interests in check while focusing on improving VR performance and achieving employment outcomes. A critical aspect of the learning curve for SRC members is to fully understand their role and responsibilities in relationship to the mission of the council; this may be provided through orientation and ongoing training mechanisms, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Legal Basis for SRCs

Section 105 of the Act mandates that each state have an SRC, unless it has an independent commission as provided in section 101(a)(21)(A)(i). SRCs report that councils are established by the governor's executive order, through state boards of education, or by state statute. While it may not be necessary to have a legal document at the state level, an executive order offers several advantages, as it brings the legal basis to the local level with regard to the uniqueness found in each state or territory and may provide additional criteria for membership, the appointing authority, the management of vacancies, and the functioning of the SRC.

These documents usually contain language mirroring the requirements of section 105. If, however, they include provisions that run counter to these statutory provisions, the federal law takes precedence.

Organizational Variation

A variety of SRC organizational structures are in place across the country. Some function on their own with assistance from agency personnel, while others have their own staff who function autonomously from the agency. There are benefits to having dedicated staff, since appointees to councils are volunteers and have full lives outside of their SRC work responsibilities. SRCs with dedicated, autonomous staff have someone behind the scenes to organize and manage business meeting plans, facilitate effective communication and teamwork, schedule and assist at committee meetings, provide organizational history, and represent them at agency workgroups and/or partnership meetings when an SRC member is not available. When a staff person is available to take care of the daily business, SRC members can focus their time and attention on the review and analysis of data, which results in membership-driven input and recommendations to VR. If VR liaison staff are assigned to assist, the SRC should help to ensure that the council remains truly consumer driven. A number of states report that VR liaisons can and do function in a manner that allows the SRC to operate effectively.

Some SRCs report that they are successful without dedicated staff when they have a dedicated group of members who get all the work done.

Appointment and Terms of Service

Section 105 through 34 CFR (361.17) in the Rehabilitation Act provides specific detail regarding the time period and number of terms that SRC members can serve:

(A) Length of term

Each member of the Council shall serve for a term of not more than 3 years, except that—

- (i) a member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which a predecessor was appointed, shall be appointed for the remainder of such term; and
- (ii) the terms of service of the members initially appointed shall be (as specified by the appointing authority

described in paragraph (3)) for such fewer number of years as will provide for the expiration of terms on a staggered basis.

(B) Number of terms

No member of the Council, other than a representative described in clause (iii) or (ix) of paragraph (1)(A), or clause (iii) or (x) of paragraph (1)(B), may serve more than two consecutive full terms.

As mandated in the Act, each member can serve no more than two consecutive terms, or 6 years, on a staggered basis. The Client Assistance Program and the 121 (Native American) VR project director positions have no term limits and are typically filled by the same individual over time. The term limit imposed for most members, however, leads to turnover that can negatively impact the council's functioning capacity for the long term.

Some SRCs report that most new members begin to fully understand their roles and responsibilities after 2 years of service. This learning curve combined with the term limits presents a conundrum for SRCs, which must determine the best approach for the recruitment of members, expedite the appointment process so that vacancies do not occur, and then educate new members about the work of the council so they become involved, make a commitment, and are viable members who add value to the council. As expected from the wide variety of SRC operational practices nationwide, the appointment process can vary greatly from state to state. For some councils, the governor chooses all members; in others, SRCs present a list of candidates to the appointing authority, who determines the final outcome; in still others, SRCs request the members they want and receive the appointments. One of the biggest challenges reported by SRCs is the difficulty of receiving timely appointments, typically from governors. Numerous efforts have been made by SRC members and staff, VR agency staff, and even elected officials to expedite the process, with little success reported. Some SRCs have waited as long as 2 years for appointments to be made, even as their membership dwindles to less than the mandated categories, which diminishes the SRC's impact on the VR system. A few SRCs have reported the value they have realized from diligently working to

establish an effective relationship with the appointments office staff through continually educating them about SRC responsibilities and member needs, maintaining communication, and showing appreciation for appointments.

Continuous Recruitment

New SRC members should be continually recruited. One of the most effective models seems to be a multifaceted plan for recurrent outreach (by all members and staff having responsibility) to targeted populations with public relations materials created to showcase the work of the SRC, the time commitment involved, and the value to the public VR system as a result of service. Each SRC will benefit from an agreed-upon recruitment plan that is continuously in process. In keeping with the federal requirements, the plan must champion diversity by disability. Additionally, each SRC should determine the diversity present in its state as related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, etc., and include the characteristics in their plan.

Some SRCs have reported that having a committee dedicated to membership recruitment can address many of the ongoing challenges involved in recruiting new members. Unlike the more passive advisory role of traditional advisory councils, participation in SRCs involves completion of federal requirements that must be managed through the commitment of time by a volunteer membership. Many SRCs educate potential members prior to their appointment about the time commitment that is needed to be a member. In addition, many SRCs report that they inform potential members about the overarching SRC goal to review, analyze, and advise system wide issues of the VR program, rather than personal agenda matters. One state's recruitment packet includes a list of expected SRC member work responsibilities, such as quarterly in-person business meetings, teleconference committee meetings, agency workgroups, partner activities, and review of various informational documents via e-mail—activities that require an average of 8 to 10 hours per month.

Some SRCs interview potential members before recommending them for appointment. The interview is conducted by at least two members and a staff person, in a communication

and physically accessible environment, with the dual goal of educating the appointee and gaining information about the individual. This allows the SRC to make an informed decision about the ongoing growth and development of its membership. An example of questions utilized by one SRC follows:

1. How did you hear about the SRC?
2. Please describe why you are interested in becoming a member of the SRC.
3. What do you see as the role of the SRC?
4. What strengths do you hope to bring to the council?
5. What other qualities, interests, etc., do you have that will enhance the SRC and our mission?
6. How do you handle situations in which you are the representative of a group and you don't personally believe or support a position of that group?
7. Will you be able to commit to the quarterly meeting and committee meeting time requirements?
8. After reviewing the SRC committee structure, what committees would you be interested in serving on?
9. Much of the SRC work is done through e-mail. Are you able to commit to responding promptly to e-mail communication?
10. The governor's office performs a background check on all applicants. Are you aware of any circumstances that might disqualify you from SRC membership?
11. Is there anything you would like to add about yourself or questions you may have about the SRC?

Each of these methods should result in potential members clearly understanding what is expected of them.

One critical aspect of the SRC's continuous recruitment efforts is a plan to establish a proactive relationship with the appointing authority in the state. One SRC reported that after a change in governors, the SRC chair, vice-chair, member, and staff person scheduled a meeting with the appointments specialist assigned to the council. The agenda for this meeting was focused on providing SRC 101 education for the new staff person along with discussions about the current status of the membership related to its recruitment efforts and vacancies. Another SRC reported that it invited the appointments staff person to a quarterly meeting

every year, providing him with time on the agenda and recognizing him for work done on behalf of the SRC. One SRC asks its newly appointed members to send a thank you card to the governor and appointments staff to acknowledge their appreciation for the opportunity. Since many SRCs report that one of their challenges can be a lethargic appointments process, it makes good sense for the council leadership to cultivate a strong relationship with the appointing authority.

A common means of recruitment is to ask existing members to recommend coworkers and associates. One SRC has found that investing time into educating and informing agency staff about the roles and responsibilities of the SRC has led to names of potential members. A few SRCs reported that when attending conferences within their state, the council would host an exhibit and utilize the opportunity to recruit members from the population of attendees. These are effective methods but should not be the sole method of recruitment. Recruitment needs to take into account the geographical representation of the state or territory as well as gender, race, age, and disability.

A less-used strategy to recruit SRC members is for current SRC members to participate in other state disability councils. SRC members who join other councils have the opportunity to explain the VR program's successes and challenges and invite other councils to work with the SRC to improve VR services and outcomes. Personal interaction of SRC members with other councils is one way to put the SRC-VR partnership into practice. Collaboration with other councils raises awareness that employment is a high priority. Collaboration with other councils leads to successful efforts in educating public policymakers on the value of employing the individuals with disabilities whom VR serves, as well as that employment's positive impact on the state economy.

An alternative to membership on multiple councils is to have designated council members give presentations to other councils and disability organizations on the responsibilities of the SRC. This presentation provides the opportunity to seek their feedback for the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and state plan and to encourage them to consider membership in the SRC.

Of the 12 categories of membership, councils have expressed the most difficulty recruiting business, industry, and labor representatives, as well as a member of the state Workforce Investment Board. Some SRCs have strategically focused on the following potential members:

- Self-employed individuals who worked with VR to set up their business
- Employers recognized for diverse hiring practices
- Chamber of Commerce members
- Labor union leaders
- Randolph-Sheppard operators
- Members of the state or local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (see <http://www.shrm.org/Communities/SHRMChapters/ProfessionalChapters/Pages/default.aspx#search>)

Orientation

For SRC members to be valuable and effective partners with VR, they must develop a keen understanding of the role and function they play. A variety of SRC training practices exist; however, almost all SRCs agree that orientation and training of members should include several elements:

- The history of the public VR program
- The major provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- The roles and responsibilities of the SRC as set forth in the Rehabilitation Act
- The VR agency's policies and practices
- Visits to VR administrative and field offices and community rehabilitation programs

This knowledge ensures that the SRC complies with the structure, function, and activities of the Act and follows its philosophy and intent. Having members who are well trained and educated benefits not only the state VR program and director, but more importantly the eligible individuals with disabilities who receive services.

In July 2008, the SRC Online Training Series, developed by the Rehabilitation Services Administration in cooperation with

Georgia State University and San Diego State University, was launched. Some SRCs report that new members are required to complete the training prior to or within 90 days of appointment. This self-directed program is intended to address the training needs of SRC members. The series contains topical modules, each approximately 30 minutes in length, intended to provide a resource to SRC members, especially new members, to increase knowledge of the VR program and improve understanding of SRC responsibilities. The series is designed for use “anytime, anywhere,” including group settings or individually.

The training is organized into three series:

- Series One: Overview and Philosophy
 - History of VR
 - Overview of the Rehabilitation Act
 - VR principles and policies
 - The role of the SRC
- Series Two: State Plan
 - The statutory basis of the state plan
 - Purpose of the state plan
 - Development of the state plan
- Series Three: Operationalizing the State Plan
 - Assessment
 - Development of VR goals
 - Program evaluation and reporting
 - SRC infrastructure

Two additional modules are under development: one on the SRC-VR partnership and one on program evaluation and quality assurance.

The training includes graphics, interactive content, a glossary of frequently used acronyms, direct links to statutory and regulatory requirements, and a quiz of competencies at the end of each module. A certification of completion is offered at the end of all modules. The training is fully accessible to all individuals, and a broader audience of agency staff and stakeholders may find the training series to be helpful.

To access the SRC Online Training Series, go to <http://www.erehab.org>, select National Training Series, then select SRC Online Training Series. The establishment of this online training series indicates the Rehabilitation Services

Administration's commitment to providing technical assistance resources to enable SRCs to better fulfill their required responsibilities by enhancing their skills and knowledge.

Training on the VR process helps members provide more meaningful advice to the state agency. Such training should include but not be limited to the following areas:

- The Rehabilitation Act
- The VR process: application, eligibility, ineligibility, order of selection, the individualized plan for employment, informed consumer choice, financial needs test, comparable benefits, scope of services, case closure, postemployment services
- Client rights and responsibilities within the VR process; the role of the Client Assistance Program; the option for mediation and the appeals process

Some SRCs provide training individually for members as they are appointed by the governor; others provide training in a small-group setting when several new members are appointed. Still other SRCs offer a member handbook (see example in Appendix E) to supplement the individual or group training/orientation. Another option is to combine training for new SRC members with training for new counselors. These examples are in no way exhaustive.

Involving the state director, VR staff, and other key leaders in training has many benefits. The interaction between these individuals and the SRC members builds a bond and feeling of trust; it allows them to get to know each other and creates an atmosphere of open communication.

In addition to training and ongoing information about the VR service system, many SRCs report that members have benefitted from training that strengthens teamwork. Topics for trainings include Robert's Rules of Order, consensus agendas, disability awareness and history, Social Security benefits, teambuilding, leadership, effective communication strategies, strategic plan writing, and strategies for educating and informing the state legislature and Congress. It is apparent that as many SRCs engage in their federal responsibilities, they recognize the need for training that will augment their capacity to be effective leaders for the people being served by the VR agency.

Some SRCs have reported that VR staff do not understand the role and function of the SRC. In an effort to remedy this situation, many SRCs make presentations at new counselor training or at other staff training sessions. One council sends a letter of welcome to each new VR agency staff person and includes information about the role, responsibilities, and actions of the SRC. Another council incorporates staff presentations into its business meeting agenda and invites local staff to join them at lunch, so that members and staff can engage in dialogue for each other's benefit. Still another SRC has stressed the importance of understanding a day in the life of the front-line field staff, including their successes and barriers. This information serves the SRC in better focusing on system change efforts. Consumers benefit when staff receive what they need to be effective.

Ongoing Training

In the survey conducted by the IRI Study Group for this publication, many respondents indicated that ongoing training opportunities were provided and typically designed by their SRC. They indicated a variety of ways that they engage in ongoing training:

- Holding an annual multiday retreat focused on the creation or review of a multiple-year strategic plan. The plans are described as a critical tool utilized by the SRCs to conduct their business throughout the year, with annual reviews of the progress made and identification of any barriers faced by the membership.
- Holding an annual 1-day retreat for the executive committee to consider how their leadership could augment the ongoing growth and development of the membership.
- Having a type of “in-service day” the day before the business meeting, incorporating time for committees to meet and for information to be offered about emerging issues, VR system updates, and/or other topics of interest to provide continual education for the members.
- Offering selected elements of the training to the entire SRC yearly to refresh knowledge of members' role in

development and evaluation of the state plan. Breakout sessions could be offered for newer members.

- Before beginning review of the state plan, utilizing the SRC online training at a business meeting as a refresher for the membership.
- Setting aside a portion of the business meeting agenda for some type of educational opportunity to further inform the membership.
- Encouraging attendance at related conferences and training.

Ongoing training topics could include, but are not limited to:

- The Rehabilitation Act
- The VR process
- Order of selection for services
- Consumer choice
- The state plan
- Cooperative agreements
- Consumer satisfaction survey
- Performance indicators
- Match and maintenance of effort
- Role of community rehabilitation programs
- Management information systems

These training opportunities share a common factor, in that SRCs depend on outside facilitators, guest speakers, and VR staff to complete the agendas. Even in dire economic times, SRCs recognize the benefit of having face-to-face planning sessions so they can be kept abreast of the current challenges of the VR agency and can reach consensus on any adjustments needed to the strategic plan and the action steps needed toward achieving the federal mandates.

Role of the Chair

For the SRC to be a true partner with the state VR agency, the chair should have mutual ongoing communication with the state VR director. The development of that relationship is critical, as the SRC partners with VR to implement the provisions of the approved state plan. Information from the VR is necessary for the SRC to be able to fulfill its mandate. When working in close

collaboration with the state agency and state director, the chair should utilize this relationship as the agency formulates its work plans and initiatives. A strong collaboration and relationship between the SRC and VR ensures that eligible individuals with disabilities seeking VR services have all the resources and support they need to achieve their goals, while also ensuring that the state VR program is effective, efficient, and in compliance with federal statutes and regulations. In the federal regulations, the selection of the chair is described as follows:

- (d) Chairperson. The chairperson must be—
 - (1) Selected by the members of the Council from among the voting members of the Council, subject to the veto power of the Governor; or
 - (2) In States in which the Governor does not have veto power pursuant to State law, the appointing authority described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section must designate a member of the Council to serve as the chairperson of the Council or must require the Council to designate a member to serve as chairperson. (34 CFR §361.17[d])

SRC chairs who are proactive and substantially involved in performing council functions are improving agency performance. Effective chairs should be able to collaborate with a number of entities and personnel and to serve as the “point person” for the SRC in a variety of arenas. Each SRC has the discretion to delineate the specific roles and responsibilities of the chair, as long as it complies with the federal statute and the state’s policies and rules. Though not mandated in the law, each SRC’s leadership structure may benefit from having a member serve as the vice-chair. The councils that report having this position as part of their executive committee indicated that it provides great benefit to the membership. A vice-chair is presented with the opportunity to step into the role of chair during any absence, as well as being mentored by the chair on responsibilities that enhance the workings of the SRC. This member should provide continuity, history, relationships with agency staff, a knowledge base of the federal requirements, and the efforts needed to guide the membership toward successful outcomes.

Some SRCs have found it useful to create an annual SRC activity calendar, which leadership can use to direct the work of the council. An example of 2 months of a calendar utilized in one state is presented below.

October (beginning of fiscal year for agency)

- Gather agency and SRC accomplishments and challenges for annual report (due date December 30th)
- Establish state plan ad hoc committee and schedule initial meeting by December 1st
- Hold committee meetings
- Meet with state director, chair, vice-chair, and agency liaison staff

November

- Hold quarterly business meeting
- Hold committee meetings
- Hold executive committee meeting (follow up from business meeting)

Committees

Most SRCs have reported that their 16- to 32-member councils have a “lead” work team, or executive committee, consisting of five to six members and that the composition of officers is varied. Many report that their executive committee is composed of a chair, vice-chair, and members at large. Others have added a treasurer, secretary, past chair, or parliamentarian or have included the state director as an ex officio member of the executive committee.

According to the SRC Web-Based Training Module (erehab.org), committees may be organized in a variety of ways. A committee structure allows members to break the work of the SRC into smaller and focused segments. This approach allows the committee to address issues in depth. Committees can communicate and work outside of business meetings and report back to the membership at a later date. The number of committees an SRC might form varies. The involvement of committee members is essential to the productivity of SRC meetings. Effective committees bring all SRC members together to conduct the vital work of the council. Through these interactions, the

synergy is created to bring varied and collective opinions together for the improvement of the VR program. The success of the committee often depends on the leadership provided by the chair. Some SRCs report that each member of the executive committee is expected to serve as the chair for a committee, while others have members who volunteer to serve in this capacity. Each committee should reach consensus regarding the commitment needed by each member to ensure the completion of the work plan.

Each SRC reported a committee structure designed for specific work tasks (e.g., state plan, consumer satisfaction) or themes (e.g., financial, service delivery effectiveness, public policy). Promising practices have been reported by SRCs that have established a strategic plan that mirrors each of the responsibilities in the Act. The following cycle has been utilized by some SRCs to educate members about the importance of committee work and outcomes.

- Education is offered about the Act, Section 105-SRC.
- The SRC creates a work plan to achieve mandates.
- A committee structure is designed and implemented.
- Committees design their work plans.
- Committees complete their work tasks for review and possible action by the full membership.
- Accomplishments are reviewed to determine the achievement of SRC mandates.

The implementation of this cyclical pattern serves as a system of checks and balances for the SRC.

The council work plan is typically designed to follow the fiscal year of the agency and has a goal with related activities/outcomes, which are assigned to the appropriate committee. Councils report that their committees typically meet monthly via teleconference, in addition to meeting face-to-face in conjunction with the business meeting schedule. During the course of the year, a committee may bring an action item or recommendation for membership consideration. On an annual basis, the committees summarize their accomplishments and provide a report to the full membership. This type of structure provides a twofold benefit for the SRC: (1) the entire membership is aware of and educated about the work of each committee and (2) the SRC can utilize the information to conduct an annual self-

evaluation (see Appendix E, Section 8, for an example) to determine successes and/or challenges in achieving the federal mandates.

Summary and Recommendations

Section 105 of the Act identifies the requirements for the SRC membership. The clearly defined categories of individuals who must be appointed to the SRC, along with a full membership complement of not less than 16 members, serve as the foundation for each council. The most critical membership requirement is the assurance that the majority of members will be people with disabilities. This ensures that the council is driven by a “consumer voice.” Though not required by law, the best practice is for the SRC to further expand membership by considering factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, language, and other areas of diversity present in its state.

Employer involvement is both mandated and critical. Special efforts should be considered to recruit representation from business, industry, labor, and the State Workforce investment Board.

To support continuously evolving membership on SRCs, the Act mandates that appointments be made on a rotating basis. This dynamic results in the SRC having some members who are well versed about the SRC-VR partnership while newer members rotate on and bring new and fresh ideas.

The SRC chair, along with executive committee members, supports planning in two critical areas. The first area relates to membership: member recruitment, timely appointments to the council, and member turnover. The second area relates to the federal requirements, where the executive committee members can provide guidance, insight, commitment, and passion to encourage the SRC-VR partnership in the creation and implementation of a strategic work plan. The executive committee can also implement a plan for self-evaluation so that the members can celebrate their successes and plan accordingly for any challenges faced.

As SRCs increase their knowledge about VR and the federal VR regulations, members will greatly benefit from ongoing training opportunities. Training can be focused on emerging and/or

current VR issues or on professional development needs. Each SRC should recognize and plan for training through a variety of modalities.

There is wide variance in how SRCs are organized and operate. Staff support for SRCs certainly varies from state to state. SRCs should have meaningful discussions about their need for staff and how this complement to the federal requirements can add value to their outcomes. Dedicated staff adds continuity and stability to SRCs, enhancing the development of the membership and assuring the maintenance of the SRCs' records, work efforts, and annual calendar.

References

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, Pub. L. No. 102-569
§503 (b), 29, U.S.C. §791(g) et seq. (1994).

Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Pub. L. No. 105-220, 112 Stat.
936 (1998).

Study Questions

1. Each state must create the SRC by a governor's executive order.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Each SRC member can serve a maximum of two consecutive 3-year terms.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The SRC depends on the state director for appointments.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. A strategic plan for each SRC is required in the Act.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. The SRC must have a minimum of 16 members.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. The SRC chair is critical to the effective partnership with the VR agency.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. One orientation option for new SRC members is found at <http://www.erehab.org>.
 - a. True
 - b. False
8. Having staff dedicated to the SRC is a benefit to the membership.
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. When recruiting new members, most SRCs report challenges finding individuals in the category of business, labor, and industry.
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. The Client Assistance Program position on the SRC can serve for a maximum of three terms.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Chapter 3: SRC Business Practices

For a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to be a strong partner with vocational rehabilitation (VR), it needs sound business practices that include basic principles of partnership. Given the term limits of council members and change in VR administrators, business practices that incorporate partnership principles can help to sustain the SRC-VR partnership.

The 2007 Global Humanitarian Platform (Ferris 2007)- <http://globalhumanitarianplatform.org>- identified five principles of partnership to allow human service organizations of different sizes, resources, and responsibilities to work together on common goals. SRCs may find these principles useful in developing bylaws, policies, and/or self-evaluation. The principles are:

- *Equality* requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations, and independence and recognize each other's constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.
- *Transparency* is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communication and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust among organizations.
- Effective action must be reality-based and action-oriented. This requires *result-oriented* coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.
- Organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their task *responsibly*, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills, and capacity to deliver on their

commitments.

- When organizations partner, they should build on each other's comparative advantage and *complement* each other's contributions.

Developing a Mission Statement

A council mission statement should be succinct, avoid jargon, and define the fundamental purpose for the council's existence. The mission statement should provide the basis for evaluating the success of the council. It should state what the council wants to accomplish rather than how. Table 3-1 provides examples of current mission statements.

Table 3-1
Sample Mission Statements

Source	Statement
Arizona	Serving all citizens of Arizona, the mission of the Arizona Governor’s State Rehabilitation Council is to advise, evaluate, and partner with the public vocational rehabilitation program in support of improving access to employment and promoting a diverse workforce statewide.
Maine	The Mission of the State Rehabilitation Council is to partner with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the development of state goals, priorities, policy, and practice, and to review and analyze the division’s results and performance in support of securing and maintaining employment, through a process of informed choice, for individuals with disabilities.
Minnesota	Empower Minnesotans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living, and community integration.
Mississippi	It is the express mission of the State of Mississippi Rehabilitation Council to ensure that Mississippians with disabilities have a strong role in shaping the VR program of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.
Missouri	To ensure that persons with disabilities have opportunities to be as productive as possible by advising the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation that services provided to persons with disabilities are of the highest quality; consumer directed; responsive to consumer choice; effective; individualized; culturally specific; and relevant to labor market trends.

Source	Statement
New Hampshire	The New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council, through action and advocacy, partners with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation to strengthen the agency's operation and effectiveness in the delivery of quality and timely services to individuals with disabilities, as they prepare for and engage in employment and careers.
Oklahoma	The Mission of the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council is to facilitate consumer education and empowerment, to assure services are of high quality, and lead to employment of individuals with disabilities in the State of Oklahoma.
Washington	To support all individuals with disabilities to receive culturally competent vocational rehabilitation services which support their realization of power and pride and exceed their expectations.
Wyoming	The Wyoming State Rehabilitation Council's mission is to review, analyze and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the delivery of effective rehabilitation services which lead to employment for individuals with disabilities and, in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, advance the use of resources necessary to promote the independence of Wyoming's citizens with disabilities.

Scheduling Meetings

SRC meetings must be held at least four times a year, be publicly announced, and be open and accessible to the public unless there is a valid reason for an executive session. In addition, meetings may consist of hearings and forums as deemed necessary by the SRC.

Councils need to follow the laws of their state in relation to meeting documents and access. Sunshine laws govern public access to governmental records, which include the bylaws, reports,

and minutes of SRC meetings. State open meeting laws govern public access to governmental meetings. (See a listing at [http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/ State_sunshine_laws.](http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/State_sunshine_laws))

Many other factors should be considered when scheduling meetings for a statewide council and its subcommittees. Some considerations include the size and geography of the state, population centers, availability of technology and remote conferencing options, and travel methods and routes. If members are traveling long distances, it sometimes makes more sense to schedule longer meetings to make the travel more worthwhile. Some SRCs indicate that it is easier to recruit members from private business if an evening format is utilized. There is no one right way to create meeting schedules that best meet the needs of diverse states.

A recent survey by the IRI Primary Study Group asked how often meetings were held and for how long. The results are shown in Table 3-2. As the table indicates, most councils hold four meetings a year, while five hold monthly meetings. Councils meeting frequently meet for a few hours or use teleconference or videoconference technology. Seventeen councils noted that they meet in the same location for each meeting. Twenty-three councils rotate the location of their meetings throughout the year. The Act allows flexibility so SRCs can schedule meetings to balance the demands of time, travel, and council workload.

Table 3-2
Number and Length of Full SRC Meetings

Variable	No. of SRCs
<i>Meetings per year (n)</i>	
4	35
5	2
6	6
10	2
12	5
<i>Length of each meeting (days)</i>	
<0.5	6
0.5	13

1	18
1.5	7
2	2
3	2

Facilitating Effective Meetings and Council Communication

For both the full council and committee meetings, effective organization is critical to the function and outcome of the SRC, as is the full participation of all of the members. Keeping and disseminating minutes of the meetings is necessary for cohesiveness and is essential for keeping everything on track and moving forward. Setting a calendar annually and sending regular reminders help to ensure that busy council members set aside the necessary time to devote to council activities. Centralizing communication is also very helpful in engaging council members. Some councils post communication in a central location, such as a website, and some use a Yahoo or Google group for discussion. Provision of reasonable accommodations is a critical element for council meetings. Typically, council meeting accommodations include appropriate interpreters, handouts in alternate formats, and adaptive transportation assistance. Some SRCs have rules that no written handouts are circulated unless alternate formats are offered. Attention to these inclusive principles ensures maximum participation from all groups.

Establishing Committee Structure and Duties

Setting up the committee structure to carry out council responsibilities is one of the first tasks of SRCs. Committee structure is typically identified in bylaws, work plans, and annual reports. The partnership with VR is an important consideration, since a council may want to establish a committee structure that complements VR agency work groups. SRCs may also elect to change their committee structure for various reasons, such as unequal distribution of work for the committees, too many

committees for staffing purposes, or too few committees leading to less participation by members.

Each council's committee structure is intended to be stable enough to ensure consistency yet flexible enough to respond to its state's rehabilitation needs. Both temporary and permanent committees can be created to respond to specific issues that arise in each state. Maryland's SRC created a new standing committee to advise its Office of Blindness and Vision Services. Maryland had set out to improve service delivery for this specific population and in doing so created a separate office of its combined VR program. To ensure that significant progress was made with targeted outcomes, a new committee was created, composed of both SRC and non-SRC members, in an effort to ensure the council was as informed as possible from this community.

Involving SRC and non-SRC members on ad hoc committees is a common strategy councils use to more fully inform their work. Ad hoc committee members may join the SRC's efforts because of specific expertise or interests. These committee members, who are not governor appointed, are not asked to give the same time commitment as a full member and are not given voting privileges. Ad hoc committee members might be involved in time-limited tasks, such as providing input into the needs assessment, or their involvement might be ongoing. Some SRCs attempt to recruit and prepare ad hoc committee members for full membership as other members rotate off the council. Their input and participation is very valuable to SRC committees.

Table 3-3 provides some examples of different states' committee structures.

Table 3-3
Sample Committee Structures

State	Committees
Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Oversees SRC activities • Blindness and Vision Services Committee: For the Office for Blindness and Vision Services, assists in the development of planning activities; participates in policy development; assists with the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, program evaluation, comprehensive system of personnel development, and priority and standing objectives; reviews and monitors the grant for independent living services for older individuals; assesses consumer satisfaction • Employment and Career Development Committee: Develops innovative projects related to employment outcomes; advises VR regarding enhancement of relationships with employers; assists in marketing and outreach to employers; advises regarding programs, focus, and performance of the Workforce and Technology Center • Membership and Resources Committee: Monitors council composition; oversees recruitment; facilitates the appointment process; coordinates orientation of new members; develops the council budget; and ensures coordination with other councils • Policy and Planning Committee: Assists in the development of the state plan; partners with VR with the annual public meetings; assists in the review of the comprehensive system of personnel development; and participates in the development and review of the triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment • Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee: Develops and distributes public information materials and the annual report;

State	Committees
	<p>provides recommendations related to information/data collection; reviews Client Assistance Program, mediation, and appeals reports; and coordinates legislative and advocacy activities</p>
Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Oversees SRC activities • Council Analysis, Review, and Development Committee: Enhances the capacity of the membership through effective recruitment, education of responsibilities, and ongoing development of policies and guidelines • Finance Committee: Assures the sustainability of the SRC through sound financial accountability and stewardship • Partners and Resources Committee: Establishes collaborative linkages with service providers, advocacy organizations, and legislators • Service Delivery Effectiveness Committee: Reviews, analyzes, and advises the VR agency on program effectiveness and consumer satisfaction • State Plan Committee: Ensures that the mandates set forth in the Rehabilitation Act are carried out in the written plan for the delivery of state VR services • Ad Hoc Committees: Appointed as the need arises, to carry out a specified task

State	Committees
New York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Provides leadership; assigns issues to standing committees; develops linkages with the business community; ensures that council work is done collaboratively; provides informational materials about the council; educates legislators, the business community, and other stakeholders regarding VR funding, legislation, and employment opportunities • Membership Committee: Facilitates the recruitment and retention of SRC members; manages orientation and mentoring of new members; prepares nominations of new SRC members to the Board of Regents • Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee: Reviews extent, scope, and effectiveness of VR services; conducts triennial statewide needs assessment; assesses consumer satisfaction • Workforce Development Committee: Provides recommendations regarding state equal employment outcomes; reviews extent, scope, and effectiveness of employment and marketing services; develops partnerships with employers; reviews transition and school to work issues; jointly approves impartial hearing officers • Policy, Procedures, and State Plan Committee: Helps prepare the state plan; advises regarding goals, policies, priorities, legislation, and postsecondary issues; identifies economic and other barriers that prevent the VR agency from serving larger numbers of people with disabilities
Wisconsin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Focuses on council operations and impartial hearing officers • Reports Committee: Addresses the annual report and state plan • Evaluation Committee: Focuses on VR performance and consumer satisfaction

Retaining Active Members

Chapter 2 discussed ways to recruit new members, but another important activity is to retain active members. Many SRCs have expressed the frustration, “They were so energized when they joined the council. What happened?” As council chairs and staff have discussed retaining active members, some common strategies have emerged:

- Commit time to orientation and getting to know the interests and abilities of council members so committee assignments utilize those interests and abilities.
- Reuse orientation materials to reinvigorate members to think about their role and responsibilities. One valuable resource is module one of the Rehabilitation Services Administration’s on-line training series for SRCs located on the eRehab website- www.erehab.org.
- Share information about the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils and its website (www.ncsrc.net) to motivate those interested in a national perspective.
- Give ample opportunity at council meetings as well as committee meetings for input from members on what needs to be done and what is important.
- Send council members to conferences of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind for leadership development.
- Consider member participation at the National Council on Rehabilitation Education conference, National Employment Conference, National Fiscal Conference, and the Institute of Rehabilitation Issues.
- Send council members to professional development activities provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, VR, and Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers to encourage more in-depth knowledge of the Act and its VR programs and services.

If an SRC is having difficulty recruiting or retaining active members, the VR administrator can play a key role in

strengthening the council and the partnership. The VR agency has access to stakeholders and partners interested in the success of the VR program. The VR agency can disseminate information on the council and its valued role, which can be a strong recruitment tool to draw in active members.

A retreat or summit can be an effective tool to energize an SRC and provide concentrated time for strategic planning. Unless a council has members who have organized and conducted retreats, this is another area where the VR agency can bring in the expertise to assist the SRC.

Developing Bylaws

It is important for SRCs to have structure independent from the VR agency such as bylaws, policies/procedures, or guidelines. Although many SRCs are not separately incorporated from the VR agency, bylaws still provide members and stakeholders clear expectations for the function of the council. Bylaws are rules adopted by the organization, in many cases amended over time, to define and direct the organization’s internal structure (American Society of Association Executives, 2007). Some SRCs use other terms such as guidelines or guiding principles, but for the purpose of this section the term bylaws is utilized.

Bylaws can vary from one organization to another, yet at a minimum an SRC’s bylaws should address the roles and responsibilities of the SRC and should concur with Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act (see chapter 1). Bylaws must not violate or attempt to override state or federal law. According to the American Society of Association Executives (2007), bylaws should be “neither so specific as to require frequent amending, nor so vague as to create uncertainty.” A sample outline for the bylaws, with comments, is provided in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4
Suggested sections to be Included in SRC Bylaws

Section	Comment
1. Council purpose/function	Mission statements are typically broad to encompass the various activities the SRC will undertake

Section	Comment
	<p>over time. For example, the mission statement of the New York State Rehabilitation Council (2006) is to “raise the employment rate of people with disabilities to a rate equal to people without disabilities.” Bylaws could have a very specific purpose statement, such as the one used in Michigan (2006), “The general purpose of the Council is to review, analyze, and advise Michigan Rehabilitation Services regarding all rehabilitation programs and policies administered in Michigan under the Act.”</p>
<p>2. Appointment— composition of membership a. Vacancies</p>	<p>At a minimum, membership must include those entities mandated in Section 105. In addition, each state may want to have additional members based on the unique population of the state or the VR agency type (general, blind, or combined). For example, combined agencies may want to separately include a representative for individuals who are blind, or a state may want to include a specified representative from the governor’s office. Additionally, while Section 105 states that members must be appointed by the governor, it may be helpful to have the bylaws affirm the responsibility of the council to actively recruit candidates who would incorporate the required composition for appointment. It may also be helpful to designate the minimum and maximum number of</p>

Section	Comment
	members.
<p>3. Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Terms of appointments b. Officers/duties/terms c. Voting/nonvoting (ex officio) d. Removal of members e. Members' responsibilities/standards 	<p>The Act provides for appointment terms of 3 years with no more than two consecutive terms, with several exceptions. This requirement can also be reflected in the bylaws. In addition to outlining the term limits for members, the Act mandates that membership terms be staggered so that SRCs do not have too many new members at one time. The bylaws should identify members who can vote and those who cannot, who are referred to "ex officio" members. Other subsections within membership could include the election of officers, their terms, and their titles and duties.</p>
<p>4. Conflict of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cannot vote on an issue in which the member would financially benefit b. Contribute field of expertise and avoid personal platform 	<p>Bylaws should provide guidance under circumstances when a conflict of interest may arise. At a minimum it must indicate that a member cannot vote on any matter that would provide a direct financial benefit to himself or herself or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under state law (see Rehabilitation Act, Section 105[e]). Additionally, since the required composition of the SRC membership is designed to contribute to the overall mission based on field of expertise and personal experience, it could be helpful to have a general statement about the importance of avoiding a personal platform (see, e.g.,</p>

Section	Comment
	Michigan Rehabilitation Council, 2006, Article IV, Section A,4).
<p>5. Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Frequency b. Location c. Meeting structure d. Governing rules e. Compensation/expenses f. Accessibility g. Electronic participation h. Public meeting standards to comply with state law 	<p>SRCs are required to hold open public meetings at least four times a year (Rehabilitation Act, Section 105[f]). Each state has a great deal of flexibility as to where, when, and how long the meetings are held. Again, it is helpful if the bylaws give direction without being too prescriptive. For example, the bylaws should not state that the SRC will meet the third Thursday in January, April, July, and October, which could invalidate a quarterly meeting if circumstances required a change. Instead, it could state that at the last meeting of each year the council will determine the meeting dates and locations for the next year. The bylaws can also outline the structure in which the business will be conducted during the meeting, such as utilizing Robert’s Rules of Order or a consensus model.</p> <p>A review of the state’s open meeting laws could be provided in this section of the bylaws. Other general information for the meeting section could include compensation to members and/or reimbursement of expenses for members who attend meetings; the use of current and future technology for meeting and voting, which would allow for greater participation; and the ways the SRC intends to ensure that</p>

Section	Comment
	<p>meetings are both physically and programmatically accessible to members and the public. Accessibility applies not only to the meeting place but also to the meeting materials and electronic information.</p>
<p>6. Quorum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a procedure: number of members vs. percentage of members b. Track eligibility to vote c. Voting procedure 	<p>It is best if the bylaws don't give an exact membership number to determine if a quorum exists, since those numbers can vary over time. Instead, use some type of percentage of voting members to ensure there are enough people present to conduct a comprehensive meeting. It is important to maintain a list of members who are eligible to vote and those that should not vote, either because they are ex officio members or have a conflict of interest on the matter. Bylaws can also provide guidance on voting procedures, by ballot, voice, or under certain circumstances electronically.</p>
<p>7. Organizational structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fiscal year b. Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Staff/responsibility of supervision ii. Finances c. Committee structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Responsibilities/authorities ii. Ad hoc committee creation/dissolution 	<p>Among general organizational issues, the fiscal year for the SRC could be stated, such as calendar year, the state's fiscal year, or the federal fiscal year. It can be determined based on any 12-month cycle, but it should make the most sense for the business to be conducted. A section on resources could include staffing, fiscal management, and the annual development of a resource plan and/or contracting. How an SRC</p>

Section	Comment
	<p>should resolve a dispute with the VR agency over a resource plan should also be discussed. Staffing is a critical area to an organization; bylaws should outline the overall duties of the staff and how staff, particularly those employed by the VR agency, avoid conflict of interest in other duties performed by the state. Section 105 allows the SRC to supervise and evaluate the performance of the staff, which is a critical function and therefore must be outlined in the bylaws. The organizational section could also set up the structure of committees. It may be better to only name a few (two to four) standing committees and allow for ad hoc committees as needed. This provides the SRC flexibility to address pressing needs that cannot be predicted. Allowing for committees to come and go adds flexibility to effectively carry out council functions.</p>
8. Amendment of bylaws	

In addition to bylaws, the SRC may want to develop policies or standard operational procedures. Bylaws provide the “why” of the organization, whereas policies and procedures provide the “how.” Policies can explain the day-to-day responsibilities and activities of the staff and members. See Appendix E for examples of bylaws and operational procedures.

Developing a Resource Plan

Section 105(d) requires SRCs to prepare a resource plan in conjunction with VR that provides resources, including funding,

staff and personnel, and in-kind contributions, that are necessary to carry out SRC functions. The VR agency can draw resource funds from an array of options; the law does not stipulate which federal or state funds must be utilized. All funds must flow through the VR agency to the SRC, which in turn must maintain some type of fiscal accountability for the use of the funds. The resource plan should include VR resources already in existence. In terms of personnel, the structure for staffing an SRC may differ from state to state; some VR agencies contract with an outside entity for staff to oversee the SRC day-to-day operations, while other states provide internal staff to support the activities of the council. In either case, the resource plan should reflect the level of funding that the VR agency will provide to the SRC.

The survey conducted by the 36th IRI Study Group showed that only a minority of the SRCs currently developed and managed their own budgets (see Table 3-5). Often, both the SRC and the VR agency are hesitant to set aside funds for SRC administration, particularly when state budgets are tight and the VR agency may be under an order of selection. However, under Section 105, VR is responsible for providing administrative support necessary and sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council. Financial and personnel resources must therefore be included in the budget.

Table 3-5
*SRC Fiscal Management**

Item	SRCs
The VR agency disbursed funds.	29
The SRC actively developed and managed its budget.	16
The SRC had no budget.	5
The SRC utilized an independent fiscal agent.	4
The liaison managed the budget.	1
The liaison and chair developed the budget.	1
The VR agency developed the resource plan.	1
The SRC was unsure who managed the financial support.	1

*Respondents were asked to indicate all statements that applied to them.

For the SRC to be an equal partner, it is critical for the SRC members, staff, and VR to establish a fully implemented resource plan that includes separate management of a budget. When the SRC allows VR to manage council financial responsibilities without active participation from the council, the SRC may be restricted in its ability to perform the mandated responsibilities outlined in the Act.

Below is an example of various categories for budget line items. SRCs, in partnership with VR, will need to determine their own budget categories, number of staff, salary, fringe benefits, occupancy expenses, and indirect costs. Certain categories may be listed with a projected cost yet be provided in kind to the SRC, while other categories will have an actual cost that will be directly expended based on resource plan decisions, such as travel expenses for staff and members.

Table 3-6
Suggested Categories of Budget Items

Salary
Program manager
Administrative assistant
Fringe benefits
Administration
Audit/financial review
Information technology system support
Accommodations
Office
Supplies
Postage
Printing
Miscellaneous
Travel
Travel nonemployees
Travel staff expenses
Registration
Activities

Meetings and public hearings
Consumer satisfaction
Annual report/marketing materials
Conferences
Training
Occupancy
Rent
Electronic telecommunications
Utilities
Equipment rental
Liability insurance
Fiscal agent fee

Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the business practices an SRC needs to function as an effective partner despite changes in membership and changes in VR agency leadership. The business practices can be revised to meet the changing demands of the council. The VR agency can play an important role, providing expertise and information, so the SRC can tailor the business practices to the needs of both the SRC and the VR agency.

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Study Questions

1. Five principles for partnership that should be incorporated into business practices are equality, transparency, result-orientation, responsibility, and complementarity.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. A council mission statement should state what that council wants to accomplish.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. SRC meetings must be held six times per year.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Once a committee structure is included in the SRC bylaws, it cannot be changed.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. According to a 2010 survey of SRCs, the most common format for council meetings is a full-day meeting four times per year.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. The VR agency should not offer to assist the SRC with a strategic planning retreat, regardless of in-house expertise within the VR agency.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. SRC bylaws should address conflict of interest in relation to voting on issues that could result in financial gain.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. State laws that require public notice of meetings are called
 - a. Freedom of Information Act
 - b. Workforce Investment Act
 - c. State open meetings laws
 - d. Sunshine laws

9. At a minimum, bylaws for the SRC should include the following:
 - a. The exact time and location meetings are to be held
 - b. The names of the individuals that will be holding office
 - c. Responsibilities and membership composition as outlined in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - d. The mission of the council as outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

10. The resource plan must include which one of the following:
 - a. A budget with expense categories
 - b. Explanation of how the state VR agency will provide support to carry out the functions of the council
 - c. Name of the outside fiscal agent
 - d. A report of expenses from members to request reimbursement

Chapter 4: Implementation of Responsibilities

This chapter examines how State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) fulfill their mandated responsibilities found in the Rehabilitation Act, primarily in Section 105 through 34 CFR (361.17). The discussion will address information needed to fulfill the SRC role to “review, analyze, and advise” the vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, consider an order of selection for services (OOS), work with the VR agency in development and review of the state plan, provide input to the comprehensive system of personnel development, evaluate consumer satisfaction, facilitate public participation, select impartial hearing officers, and address advocacy issues.

Performance Evaluation: “Review, Analyze and Advise”

The SRC mandate to *review, analyze, and advise* VR agencies is a key obligation. Councils have a duty to review, analyze, and advise the state agency on “eligibility (including order of selection for services (OOS)); the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by state agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes.” The challenge for councils to effectively fulfill this duty is considerable, for several reasons:

- Council members are volunteers, with other full-time employment or responsibilities.
- Council members serve only one or two 3-year terms.
- Council members generally represent other disciplines and don’t have the specific, detailed knowledge of the

Rehabilitation Act and VR program needed to meet the obligations under the Act.

- Councils meet quarterly, some a bit more often, necessitating a very efficient use of time.
- Councils have responsibilities in addition to the duty to review, analyze, and advise, which build on this function. These responsibilities include effective evaluation of the VR agency; development of the state plan and state goals and priorities; consumer satisfaction; and the statewide needs assessment.

The accomplishment of the duty to review, analyze, and advise, within the timeframe of quarterly or periodic meetings, requires that councils have access to comprehensive data and information in a timely fashion. Without access to meaningful reports and statistics, the council cannot provide effective analysis or advice. It is the VR agency's responsibility, as a partner of the council, to provide the information, data, and reports. Every VR agency produces extensive amounts of data on a regular basis. The selected reports and information to be provided to the SRC should be timely and relevant to the issues facing the VR program being addressed in the council's agenda. Usually it is more effective when data are accompanied with contextual explanations of how the information relates to the concerns being addressed by the VR agency and the SRC at that time.

This section discusses some types of data and reports that SRCs primarily use to review, analyze, and advise the VR agency about trends and issues that impact the effectiveness of service delivery and, ultimately, employment outcomes.

Standards and Indicators

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has established, in accordance with Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act, a set of national evaluation standards and performance indicators that apply to VR agencies and identify minimum quality and quantity performance expectations. The performance of a state VR agency in meeting standards and indicators is reported annually and integrated into the state plan. When a state agency does not meet required levels of performance, it must, jointly with

RSA, develop a program improvement plan. Then the RSA and the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers (TACE) provide technical assistance to assist the agency to meet the performance indicators.

Meeting or not meeting the Standards and Performance Indicators may impact funding. It is therefore critical for the SRC and VR agency to jointly review performance on standards and indicators to ensure that the VR agency is effectively meeting them and providing quality VR services to individuals with disabilities. If minimal standards are not being met, the obstacles preventing the agency from meeting standards need to be identified, and proactive strategies to improve performance need to be identified and implemented.

Budget and Expenditure Information

To evaluate whether the VR agency is administering funds efficiently and to evaluate the adequacy of resources, the SRC and the VR agency administration should regularly review fiscal information. This information includes expenditures for personnel services, administrative costs, consumer services, and other costs of operating the VR program. This information can be found in the RSA-2 financial report submitted by state agencies to RSA. Funding changes resulting from state budget cuts or maintenance of effort penalties may require evaluation of the need to adjust current or future staffing or services.

It is helpful for the SRC to understand the budget process of its particular state, including levels of spending authority, expenditure schedules, and appropriation requests. The VR agency should share fiscal information with the SRC when preparing budget proposals. This is especially important when budget cuts are under consideration. Likewise, information about increases in funding as a result of any federal reallocation will assist the SRC in understanding the level of resources available to the agency. Reallocation, the redistribution of funds turned back by other state agencies, has state match requirements.

The support of the SRC can be particularly critical if it becomes necessary for the VR agency to implement an OOS or make cuts in staffing or cost of services. By regularly sharing financial information and involving the SRC in fiscal decisions, the

VR agency demonstrates both transparency in the utilization of its funding and the solicitation of input from its primary stakeholder.

As an example, the policy committee of the New Hampshire SRC meets quarterly. The meetings are held no later than 2 weeks after the completion of a federal fiscal year quarter for the sole purpose of reviewing data. In the administration of its charge, the policy committee reviews caseload data (such as number of applications completed, number of eligibilities established, number of case plans in place, and average length of time customers, based on disability, were in each status for the quarter compared with the same quarter's data for three previous fiscal years). As for fiscal data, the state VR agency provides, as requested, information such as spreadsheets that provide a comparison of financial activity in case services for the quarter against that of the same quarter of the previous year, as well as a summary of all program expenditures by month of the fiscal year. In addition, the committee is provided with both the amount and percentage of the state grant allocated to service personnel, administration, and client services in the fiscal year. With this information, the committee can clearly see how much of the grant was allocated in the quarter and how much of the grant remains to be distributed for the year. The SRC expects that VR will allocate no less than 75% of the yearly grant (federal dollars matched by state dollars) to client services. It is the prerogative of the policy committee to request additional data, changes in data format, and any other information which it believes will help inform its deliberations. In addition, at times, the committee will ask the VR agency not to provide a specific data report because the committee has found that the information is no longer pertinent to its task of analyzing and advising the full SRC about the need for VR to enter an OOS. At each of its quarterly meetings, the SRC receives a comprehensive report from the policy committee chair, including copies of all the data it reviewed. Quarterly, the SRC considers a motion to either recommend that VR enter into an OOS or continue to operate out of an OOS.

However, each state differs in resources and data systems available. It is important that each SRC sit down with the leadership of the agency and determine what data and reports are available and what the SRC needs in order to provide good guidance.

Policy Information

State plan assurances (4.2[b][2]) include the statement that the VR agency “regularly consults with the SRC in the development, implementation, and revision of VR policies and procedures.” The motivation for policy revisions can come from many directions. Inconsistent interpretations of existing written policy may be revealed through the quality assurance process. Budget constraints may require changes to service provision, requiring policy changes; changes in federal or state legislation and regulations can require policy amendments. Regardless of the source, the VR agency needs to establish a mechanism for routinely sharing new or revised policies and assessing the potential impact of policy changes on employment outcomes. Input from the SRC can also be beneficial in assessing the need to conduct a public meeting regarding policy change.

New council members often comment on how complicated the rules and policies for VR seem to be. Council members need not become experts on VR law and regulations, but it is reasonable to expect that members will learn applicable regulatory requirements when evaluating policy or proposing changes. When implementing responsibilities related to policy compliance, council members should know what laws and regulations come into play and the priority of laws and policies, which the Wisconsin SRC dubbed the “hierarchy of rules.” Of course, the U.S. Constitution is the “supreme law of the land,” and all federal and state laws, including the Rehabilitation Act, must follow constitutional mandates. Federal laws have priority over state laws under the “supremacy clause” of the Constitution. Federal regulations are next in the hierarchy, followed by federal policy. The state constitution, state laws, state regulations, and state policy would follow in order. When in conflict, the policy, regulation, or law higher up on the hierarchy would prevail.

State VR policy must comply with the Rehabilitation Act, Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Act is implemented through federal regulation 34 CFR §361. RSA offers guidance on VR policy through policy directives, feedback to each state plan, and state VR agency monitoring reviews. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) provide policy guidance on administrative and fiscal policy. While

the majority of EDGAR pertains to educational entities, applicable regulations for VR include 34 CFR §§74, 76, 77, 79–82, 85, and 86.

After federal law and regulation, state policies come into play. A state can implement policies that are not in conflict with the Act. A state can also require the VR agency to follow state policies where the Act allows state preferences or is silent on how to proceed. For example, many state agencies have a policy that requires an eligible individual seeking college education to attend an in-state college if the course of study is available at that college. This is primarily a fiscal management strategy to favor lower, in-state tuition expenses over higher, out-of state expenses. Federal regulations allow fee schedule provisions that do not unduly restrict individuals' right to informed choice. Some of the states with in-state college mandates balance choice rights by allowing students to select higher-priced out-of-state colleges by paying the difference in cost. Other states do not have such restriction on the choice of college education. Both approaches are consistent with federal regulation.

Many states negotiate bulk contracts and have purchasing laws that require all state agencies to buy from a particular vendor, or, for example, purchase a particular brand of computer equipment. Such policies, if applied to VR clients' individualized plan for employment services and goods, can unreasonably restrict informed choice. If an SRC believes that state policy is causing a VR agency policy or practice to be out of compliance, it could bring the issue to the attention of the state VR agency administrator and, if appropriate, support agency efforts to bring the policy into compliance.

The definitive source for VR policy is the Rehabilitation Act and the federal regulations found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Other resources are as follows:

- *VR agency staff.* Most VR agencies have staff dedicated to policy analysis who can explain not only what the policy is but the origin of the policy.
- *The SRC.* SRC membership includes a representative from the Client Assistance Program, which has a policy consultation role in state plan development.

- *The website of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils* (www.ncsrc.net). This site provides links to policy resources as well as a listserv that council chairs can use to consult with other state council chairs.
- *The Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers*. These centers are a resource for state VR agencies and SRCs in developing, modifying, or clarifying VR policies. They can provide training or technical assistance on a VR issue when it is identified as a priority for the state VR system.

Even if all the policies of a VR agency comply with the Rehabilitation Act, there may be some policies that could be improved. The SRC can play a very useful role by providing feedback on the clarity and readability of state VR policy. The VR policy provides direction for VR staff and can also serve to explain to VR consumers and the public what VR can do and under what circumstances it can do it. Policies that are understandable to the public can reduce a great deal of mistrust.

Management Information

VR agency management regularly collects and analyzes information as part of quality assurance measures and the assessment of service delivery, fiscal, and human resource needs. Typical reports generated by the VR agency include the following information:

1. Timeliness of case movement
2. Demographic data on individual disabilities
3. Caseload size
4. Information about individual program participants, such as transition youth or veterans
5. Participation and outcomes for minorities
6. Outcomes by each region or district in the state or territory
7. Outcomes and earnings for specific disability populations

While reports of this nature provide a snapshot for the VR agency, comparisons of data over time will indicate trends, both positive and problematic. Access to this information is important to

enable SRCs to stay informed about the effectiveness and efficiency of the VR agency's operations.

Order of Selection

Another area where the SRC-VR partnership is critical is in determining when the state agency must develop and implement an OOS. Federal regulations provide that when states cannot provide the full range of services to all eligible individuals who apply due to lack of adequate resources, an order must be established indicating which eligible individuals will be served first (34 CFR §361.36). The regulations are very clear that individuals with the most significant disabilities receive first priority. In their partnership, VR consults with the SRC about five main areas relating to OOS: the need to establish an OOS; priority categories; criteria for determining individuals with the most significant disabilities; and implementation and administration of an OOS.

The *need to establish an OOS* is determined as the VR agency and the SRC review the financial status and resources of the organization. The review includes examination of how funds are expended for the provision of VR services using reports or other documents generated by the fiscal division of the agency, federal reports such as RSA-2 and RSA-113, and caseload flow reports. The participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need and the agency fee schedule are also considered by the VR agency and the SRC when determining whether agencies should initiate an OOS. While VR is responsible for administering funds available through the VR basic, supported employment, and other grant funds, consideration of how those funds are used within the confines of the Rehabilitation Act as amended and federal regulations is an area where the SRC can have significant input.

Refining *priority categories* of the OOS by the VR agency in consultation with the SRC has major impact on who can be served and potentially when. States are obligated to closely consider the categories within OOS, ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are served first. The SRC has a unique role to play here, especially when considering that some members of the SRC have received or are receiving VR services.

These individuals have personal experience with the VR system and are sometimes best equipped to provide input regarding how to define or further refine categories that will determine who gets served and who has to wait until resources are available.

When establishing *criteria for determining individuals with the most significant disabilities* (34 CFR 361.(5)(30), the SRC and VR are guided by federal regulations that define what it means to be an “individual with a significant disability.” The definition has three components: (1) the individual must have a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome; (2) the individual must be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and (3) the individual has one or more physical or mental disabilities based on an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

In terms of *implementation*, VR agencies must determine, and report to RSA, whether to establish and implement an OOS. States must reevaluate this determination whenever circumstances occur, such as a decrease in fiscal or personnel resources or an increase in program costs, and the states find that they cannot provide a full range of services for all eligible individuals. States must advise individuals on when they are determined eligible, what category they are placed in, and which categories are receiving services; individuals placed on a waiting list must be provided referral information to other available services and programs, in the event they seek services from other sources. Additionally, individuals must be advised of their rights to appeal their category assignment. Other activities include revising or updating state plans to reflect the OOS.

The *administration* of the OOS includes states’ continuing to serve individuals currently receiving services, providing assessments to all individuals applying for services, and establishing and maintaining a waiting list for individuals who are eligible but do not meet the criteria for the categories being served at a given time. The SRC can assist VR in planning how to continue to provide services to individuals currently receiving services when an OOS is implemented. State agencies have some room to be creative and flexible when implementing OOS. The

SRC-VR partnership is particularly valuable in finding ways to serve the maximum number of people with limited personnel and financial resources.

Goals and Priorities and Effectiveness Evaluation

The joint activity requirements given to the SRC and the VR agency by the Act promote a dynamic collaborative process of organizational planning and program implementation. These key components require the SRC and VR agency to jointly

- Establish for the VR agency goals and priorities that address and focus on the needs of individuals with disabilities within the jurisdiction, as determined by the triennial comprehensive needs assessment. These goals and priorities serve to guide the VR agency as it administers the public VR program.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the VR agency's effectiveness in administering the public VR program, implementing and advancing the jointly developed goals and priorities, and meeting federal standards and indicators. An evaluation of the VR agency's effectiveness and a report of progress on implementing goals and priorities to the Secretary of Education is part of the state plan process.

The interaction involved in the joint evaluation of agency effectiveness and development and review of goals and priorities provides an opportunity for the SRC to engage with the VR agency and supports the partnership relationship between them. These activities help shape the values and goals of the VR agency and help them to reflect the VR needs of the community that they serve. The jointly developed goals and priorities are grounded in the needs of people with disabilities in the community, as established by the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. Identifying the needs of people with disabilities in the community is a joint endeavor, as is the process of establishing goals and priorities of the agency to meet those identified needs. VR agency performance on standards and indicators is another factor to be considered in the goals and priorities—and this performance is part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the VR agency in

administering the public VR program. The effectiveness evaluation, which requires the SRC and the VR agency to jointly evaluate the agency's effectiveness administering the public VR program, establishes some degree of accountability upon the VR agency with the SRC. Whatever method the VR agency and the SRC choose to implement this responsibility, the results of the evaluation are required to be submitted as part of the VR agency's state plan. The state plan reporting requirement gives this evaluation a high profile, with the results subject to review by the RSA.

State Plan

A key document in the implementation of the public VR program, the state plan describes the policies and procedures adopted by a VR agency to administer the public VR program. The VR agency provides assurances that it will follow all of the requirements detailed in the Rehabilitation Act as it provides VR services to people with disabilities in that jurisdiction. The state plan describes how key components and processes of the Rehabilitation Act will be implemented and administered and, ultimately, how individuals with disabilities will be provided VR services leading to employment.

State plan assurances provide that the SRC gets the information necessary to evaluate VR agency performance; that the VR agency receives the advice and recommendations of the SRC in establishing goals and developing policies to implement those goals; and that the SRC evaluates VR agency performance in achieving those goals. For example, the VR agency is required to provide the SRC with the same reports and information that the VR agency provides to RSA. By ensuring that they have access to information about VR agency performance, the Rehabilitation Act empowers the SRC to provide advice and recommendations from a position of being an informed collaborator.

Specifically, Section 105 of the Act requires the SRC to assist in the preparation of the state plan and amendments to the plan. The state plan contains attachments, one of which relates directly to the SRC: Attachment 4.2(c), which is a summary of input and recommendations of the SRC and the response of VR,

including explanations for rejection of input or recommendations. (See example in Appendix E, Section 5.)

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

With the 1992 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, the public VR program first began requiring that qualified rehabilitation professionals serve the employment and independent living needs of persons with disabilities. The 1998 amendments clarified the intent and requirements of the states in order to create greater consistency in the application of the standards. The intent of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, as presented in the 1998 amendments, is to ensure the quality of personnel who provide VR services to assist individuals with disabilities achieve employment outcomes through the public VR program (Munro, Howard, Maher, Menz, & West-Evans, 1998). States must report annually to RSA as an attachment to their State Plan.

Since the quality of personnel and the training provided to those personnel can have a direct impact on the performance of the VR agency, the SRC has a role in reviewing the plan and offering feedback to the state VR agency. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development attachment to the state plan offers a detailed look at staffing levels and the state VR agency plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel.

Some SRCs take a particular interest in staff training and incorporate staff training questions into their satisfaction surveys. One council noted that the state VR agency provides a quarterly report to the SRC on the training topics provided to VR staff that quarter.

Partnerships

Systemic issues involving partnerships may be less apparent in data and reports. Public comment, focus groups, and review of the VR agency's and other departments' policies or practices may be necessary to answer these questions:

- How are working relationships between departments impacting effectiveness?
- Do conflicting policies from different departments create barriers for consumers?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of VR and other agencies clear to the agencies as well as the consumers?

One commonly expressed concern of councils relates to transition services for high school students with disabilities. Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for schools and the Rehabilitation Act for VR agencies have requirements and benefits for transition services for students with disabilities. However, specific roles and responsibilities are left to states to work out through interagency agreements. IDEA includes language directing schools not to take on the responsibility of other agencies, such as VR:

Nothing in this part relieves any participating agency, including a State vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to children with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency. (34 CFR 300.324[c][2])

At the same time, VR points to language stating that the VR role should be one primarily of planning.

As a member of the SRC, the Client Assistance Program representative can often provide input on systemic issues. Further, because the membership of the SRC includes representation from a number of disciplines, the SRC may be able to advise the VR agency on effective means to correct misunderstandings or misinformation between agencies.

The SRC Role in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

VR agencies and SRCs are jointly required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to conduct a triennial CSNA. The CSNA is the basis for the state plan goals, objectives, and strategies. The CSNA has the following required information goals:

- The VR service needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment; individuals with disabilities who are minorities; individuals with disabilities who are unserved or underserved; and individuals with disabilities served through the statewide workforce investment system
- The need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs

The SRC should be involved as a partner with VR in the following stages in the CSNA process:

- Planning the assessment goals
- Collecting data and providing community links
- Reviewing findings
- Developing recommendations
- Informing the state plan goals

RSA's guide to meeting the requirements of a CSNA can be found on RSA's website at

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/resources.html#needs-assessment>.

Periodically reviewing the results of the CSNA is a valuable activity in determining whether the goals and objectives established by the VR agency are responsive to the needs identified by consumers and stakeholders of the VR program. Comparing the CSNA with other management information can also provide both the SRC and VR direction in defining future actions that should occur to address the needs.

Participation of the SRC with the State Agency in the Monitoring

Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires the commissioner of the RSA to conduct annual reviews and periodic on-site monitoring of programs authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act to determine whether a state VR agency is complying substantially with the provisions of its state plan under Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act and with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established under Section 106.

RSA conducts the annual review by collecting and

analyzing data and information related to performance and compliance of VR and independent living programs from multiple sources such as state plan amendments; standard and indicators reports; RSA-2; RSA-113; RSA-911 and other data reports. These reports are analyzed and feedback given to the state.

In addition, RSA conducts on-site monitoring of the state VR and independent living programs every three years. It engages in discussions on-site with the state agency staff, the SRC, the Statewide Independent Living Council, persons with disabilities who receive program services, and stakeholders. They also analyze data and reports related to performance and compliance of the VR and IL programs from multiple sources.

Following the review, the RSA team develops observations and recommendations for the VR agency to improve program performance. RSA's Technical Assistance Unit and Review Team work with Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers to include technical assistance and continuing education needs in their annual work plan.

The RSA monitoring team considers several SRC items:

- Onsite meeting(s) with SRC
- SRC annual report
- SRC state plan attachments and recommendations
- Input received at state plan public hearings and other forums
- CSNA

(See example of SRC monitoring visit "notebook" in Appendix E, Section 6.)

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Section 105(4) indicates:

to the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—

- (A) all the functions performed by the designated State Agency,
- (B) Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided by State Agencies and other private/public entities delivering services to persons with disabilities, and

(C) employment outcomes achieved by persons receiving services under this Title.

In assessing consumer satisfaction, SRCs and state agencies employ a variety of methods and strategies. Some contract with public or private research companies or colleges and universities; others develop their own methods within the SRC itself. Regardless of approach, measuring satisfaction involves measuring attitudes, and from a research perspective, can be categorized as descriptive in nature. Such research typically employs written surveys or questionnaires, structured interviews, focus groups, or other similar activities.

Considering satisfaction with a state VR agency involves looking at consumers' satisfaction with VR service delivery and outcomes. VR services have several stages, including application, eligibility determination, in-services, employment, closure, and follow-up. To be most useful, the evaluation should address consumer satisfaction with each stage of service delivery. While it is easier to measure satisfaction at closure, due to the extended length of some VR plans, the consumer may not be able to accurately recall his or her initial experience at closure. For this reason, satisfaction surveys that include input from consumers at different points in their VR experience are probably most informative. Though it may not be feasible to survey every consumer of a VR agency, an adequate sample size should generate accurate and usable information. The sample size will vary according to the methodology used. Care should be taken to make the surveys accessible to all individuals participating in the program, considering language, disability, and level of education. Alternative formats and languages must be used. If the survey is not accessible to all consumers, the results will not accurately reflect overall satisfaction.

Questions asked in a survey generally include the consumer's experience in interacting with agency staff, including the VR counselor; the nature of the counseling relationship; input into the rehabilitation planning process; satisfaction with services received; and satisfaction with the ultimate outcome (work, salary, benefits, etc.). Surveys can be developed using different approaches, but one common method is to employ a Likert scale,

which asks the consumer whether he or she strongly agrees (SA), agrees (A), is neutral (N), disagrees (D), or strongly disagrees (SD) with a statement. For example:

1. Information provided to me was easy to understand.
SA A N D SD
2. I actively participated in the development of my plan.
SA A N D SD

Examples of a variety of consumer satisfaction surveys can be found at <http://ncrtm.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=1816>.

Regardless of their methodology, consumer satisfaction studies provide a wealth of information about state VR programs that can be used by VR to improve service delivery and to provide governmental entities and the general public with positive information about VR. It is the SRC's role to recommend how to utilize the information gained.

Public Participation

Federal regulations pertaining to public participation requirements or public meetings are designed to ensure that states gather input from critical stakeholders when planning for and providing VR services. Additionally, as reviewed above, states are required to include a summary of input by the SRC in developing the state plan. As a partner to VR agencies, SRCs have a significant role in conducting public meetings for the purpose of informing the state plan and the VR services that are included in that plan.

According to 34 CFR §361.20, states must conduct public meetings prior to adopting substantial policies and procedures governing the provision of VR services designated under the state plan. The purpose and most critical component of public meetings is to ensure that the public, in particular individuals with disabilities, have the opportunity to comment on the goods and services they receive through the VR agency. With partnership as a hallmark of the primary relationship between the individuals receiving services and the agency providing services, the partnering role of the SRC with VR in planning and implementing public meetings becomes even more important. The SRC-VR agency partnership creates opportunities for various stakeholders

to make their desires, preferences, and experiences known. When SRCs collaborate with VR to schedule and conduct public meetings, attendance increases, representation of stakeholders is broader, and comments are deeper in depth and breadth; the collaboration provides a stronger forum for those who may not otherwise speak their minds regarding the VR program.

One challenge in many states is poor attendance at public meetings. To combat lack of participation, some states take advantage of the SRC-VR partnership to conduct public meetings in conjunction with statewide training activities where individuals with disabilities, their families, and service providers are gathered. In several states, public meetings are held during advocacy group state meetings or conventions where larger groups of individuals come together.

Although states have great flexibility in the way public meetings are organized, certain guidelines must be followed. The public must be provided with appropriate and sufficient notice of the meetings throughout the state in accordance with state law governing public meetings. When no state law exists regarding the conduct of public meetings, the VR agency must consult with the SRC regarding procedures to be used in administering public meetings.

For primary stakeholders to be able to fully participate in public meetings, the state must ensure that appropriate modes of communication are used when providing notice of public meetings and providing materials that will be used prior to or during the meetings. The SRC and VR must collaborate to ensure that all forums, hearings, and meetings are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Accessibility includes physical access to buildings, meeting rooms, restroom facilities, and parking. It also includes access to printed materials, which must be provided in formats such as Braille, large print, and electronic files for individuals who cannot access standard print. Interpreters and assistive listening devices must be provided for individuals who cannot hear or understand speech. Partnering with VR agencies to ensure those individuals with disabilities have access to public meetings and VR services is another area where SRC members serve in the obvious capacity of consumer voice.

Partnering between VR and the SRC to meet the federal requirement for public participation demonstrates in real time what the spirit of the law intends. When constituents see and experience that the state VR agency and the largely consumer driven SRC cooperate to make sure the public has the opportunity to have input, it is a win-win for everyone. VR has the valued-added input from individuals with disabilities and other primary stakeholders, and those same stakeholders have a voice in the way VR services are developed and provided.

Selection and Evaluation of Impartial Hearing Officers and Mediators

Individuals applying for and receiving VR services have a basic right to request a review of determinations made by the state VR agency. States are required to develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure that individuals who are dissatisfied with services may request a timely review of decisions made by the VR agency, through either an impartial due process hearing or a voluntary mediation process. In general, before escalating to a higher level review, it is best practice to attempt to resolve consumer concerns early between the individual and the VR counselor or through the state's informal dispute resolution process.

The impartial due process hearing is conducted by an impartial hearing officer. According to 34 CFR §361.5(43), such officers may not be employees of a public agency, other than an administrative law judge, hearing examiner, employee of a state office of mediators, or employee of an institution of higher education. In addition, the impartial hearing officer may not be a member of the SRC or an existing or former consumer of services. The mediator should be knowledgeable about the VR program and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and policies governing the provision of VR services. The mediator shall have been trained in effective mediation techniques that are consistent with other state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other requirements.

Maryland provides an excellent example of the SRC-VR agency partnership on this matter. The Maryland SRC, the

Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Maryland Client Assistance Program jointly plan and deliver periodic training to administrative law judges on the topic of VR services. The Directors of Field Services, the Office of Blindness and Vision Services, and the Client Assistance Program, together with the SRC chair, as well as other key VR agency staff, visit the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings to provide this training, and there are often dozens of administrative law judges in attendance. This helps to ensure that a sizeable, well-trained pool of judges exists for VR agency appeal hearings. Also, since multiple parties are represented in this effort, a balanced perspective can more readily be achieved.

Federal regulations do not require that the SRC and the VR agency jointly identify qualified and impartial mediators. Rather, the state maintains a list of qualified and impartial mediators in accordance with procedures established in the state for assigning mediators, ensuring the neutrality of the mediator. The essential role of the SRC is to assist the VR agency in identifying qualified hearing officers who have understanding of or the ability to understand the nature of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, state and federal regulations pertaining to the provision of VR services, and the policies and procedures developed and maintained by the state. In some states, SRC members help VR develop the criteria for hiring qualified hearing officers and participate in interviews. Additionally, they may partner to develop and conduct training for hearing officers.

Advocacy

The SRC advocates with federal and state legislators to promote the public VR program as a sound investment that leads to the employment of individuals with significant disabilities.

In general, federal funds may not be used to engage in lobbying activities (Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, P.L. 104-65). Unless otherwise prohibited by state law, nonfederal funds can be used in lobbying activities (Michaels, 1998). Lobbying may include the following activities:

- Attempts to influence the outcome of any federal, state, or local election, referendum, initiative, or similar procedure

- Attempts to influence the introduction, enactment, or modification of federal or state legislation by efforts to utilize state or local officials to engage in similar activities
- Attempts to influence the introduction, enactment, or modification of federal or state legislation by trying to gain the support of part or all of the general public (Michaels, 1998).

Thus, an important distinction needs to be made between lobbying and advocacy. While lobbying can be a subset of advocacy, it is narrower in scope with the specific focus of convincing legislators to vote in a requested manner on a particular legislative proposal (Michaels, 1998). SRC members should make sure that no federal funds are used to support lobbying activities. Of course, SRC members as private citizens, not representing or acting on behalf of the SRC, can lobby with their own funds while exercising their first amendment right of free speech.

SRC members, unlike VR agency employees, can take a more credible stance than VR employees when advocating for the VR program. Stated differently, unlike employees, they are not likely to be told by legislative or other decision makers that they are merely attempting to save their own jobs. Also, SRC members who were past VR clients or their family members can demonstrate the effectiveness of VR programs when advocating for individuals with disabilities. However, it is important that the state SRC fully understand the specific state laws and regulations concerning advocacy activities with state legislators.

Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the mandated activities that SRCs must perform in their active partnership with the state VR agency and has described how such activities might be carried out. As indicated, a fully functioning SRC is deeply involved in the review of, and input into, most of the core responsibilities of a state-federal VR program. As each state is organized and functions somewhat differently, it should be noted that there is no “one way” a task might be accomplished. It is recommended that SRC members use documents such as this one,

as well as input from colleagues locally, regionally, and nationally, to determine how to shape their work.

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Study Questions

1. A form of data that can assist the SRC in assessing the effectiveness of VR services is
 - a. Fiscal and budget information
 - b. Standards and indicators updates
 - c. Management information such as timeliness of case movement and caseload size
 - d. All of the above
2. The key role of the SRC, according to the Act, is to be the voice of the stakeholder in a collaborative relationship with the VR agency.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Partnering with the VR agency in planning and implementing public meetings is a critical function of the SRC and results in stronger representation at public meetings.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Which of the following is NOT a joint activity requirement imposed upon the SRC and the VR agency by the Act?
 - a. Establish goals and priorities for the VR agency, which address and focus on the needs of individuals with disabilities, as determined by the triennial comprehensive needs assessment
 - b. Conduct an annual evaluation of the VR agency's effectiveness in administering the public VR program, implementing and advancing the jointly developed goals and priorities, and meeting federal standards and indicators
 - c. Review and approve personnel transactions
 - d. Collaborate on the development of policies and procedures for the VR agency in carrying out its duties and collaborate in the development of the state plan

5. To ensure full public participation in the VR process, which of the following is true?
 - a. States must conduct public meetings prior to adopting substantial policies or procedures governing the provision of VR services.
 - b. The public must be provided with appropriate and sufficient notice of public meetings.
 - c. The state must ensure that appropriate modes of communication are used when providing notice of public meetings.
 - d. The state must ensure that all public meetings are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.
 - e. All of the above

6. An order of selection (OOS) must be established if the VR agency cannot provide a full range of services to all eligible individuals who apply due to personnel and/or financial constraints.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. The VR agency must consult with the SRC in regard to five functions of the OOS: the need to establish an OOS; the priority categories; the criteria for determining individuals with the most significant disabilities; the implementation of the OOS; and the administration of the OOS.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. Whether an “individual with the most significant disabilities” is considered a priority category is at the discretion of the VR agency and the SRC.
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. An important function of the SRC is to assist the VR agency in identifying qualified hearing officers and mediators who are knowledgeable of the VR program and laws.
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. Because of their knowledge of the VR program, VR agency staff and SRC members can be effective hearing officers and mediators.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Chapter 5: SRC Resources

To be a full and effective partner with the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, it is critical for State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) to have a full understanding of the scope of their resources for information and support. Resources come in all shapes and sizes. They can come in the form of reference materials, data, reports, and laws and regulations. Resources also come in the form of content experts, training entities, and staff support, as well as partner and stakeholder relationships. It is important for SRCs to be fully aware of and have access to resources, rather than depending on the state agency to define and provide them. This chapter outlines several major resources. The resources are discussed in terms of their relevance and frequency of use for SRC members.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, is the authorizing federal legislation on which the VR program and the SRC are based. It is important for SRC members to have access to this document as a reference, to review both agency and council purpose and duties, and to gain a fuller context by accessing other aspects of the law. The Act in its entirety can be accessed at <http://www.access-board.gov/enforcement/rehab-act-text/intro.htm>, and the VR program is detailed in Title I. Sections related to SRCs are included in Appendix A.

Rehabilitation Services Administration

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), under the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, is the federal agency that administers and supports the state VR program, including the SRC. RSA also

administers a number of related programs that are useful to individuals with disabilities and support VR efforts, including the Client Assistance Program (CAP). CAP reports should be of interest to SRCs, given the direct relationship and CAP's required membership and participation on SRCs.

The RSA website—<http://rsa.ed.gov/>—offers information on all of its programs and projects. The website provides links to rehabilitation legislation and regulations, as well as RSA issuances such as policy directives and information memoranda. The guidance, arranged by program year on the website, is listed in Appendix A.

The RSA website also provides access to information and reports on each state. Information regarding grant allotments, financial status, and state agency performance can be found on this website. Key reports include annual performance on standards and indicators and the results of RSA monitoring reports. The standards and indicators offer key performance information to SRCs because these are the standards RSA uses in evaluating each VR program's performance. Additional queries and reports can be run to glean caseload information for an individual state or in comparison with other states. Although not all data published on this site is the most up to date, the structure of this website can help inform the SRC on what data and reports to request from the state agency during a specific fiscal year.

Resource information relative to understanding other VR issues that SRCs provide feedback on, including Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and unserved and underserved populations, can also be found on the RSA website.

The website is constantly being updated with new resources. The most recent addition, still under construction as this document undergoes its final edits, is entitled "Emerging Practices". The Emerging Practices website will contain the most innovative employment, transition, human resource development, strategic planning and other practices that are resulting in improved agency performance. RSA is encouraging the state VR agencies to use this website as a technical assistance resource and an opportunity to share their strengths with other agencies looking to improve.

In addition to all of these resources, the website provides contact information for RSA staff. RSA staff liaisons are assigned to each state, and one staff liaison is assigned specifically to SRCs. The SRC would likely not be in frequent contact with RSA; however, it is important for SRCs to have independent access as appropriate.

VR Federal Regulations

The VR federal regulations, 34 CFR §361—located at http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_06/34cfr361_06.html—are the main resource for understanding SRC duties and requirements, as well as the full scope of the VR program and its basic rules and requirements. The web link breaks down the regulations by chapter for ease of navigation. Having knowledge of and easy access to this reference is a necessity for SRCs, in terms of being able to review, analyze, and advise the state agency in the performance of its duties. Many state VR agency policies are based on these regulations, and VR state agency policies cannot contradict the federal regulations. A related source is the federal regulations on CAPs, 34 CFR §370, located at http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_06/34cfr370_06.html, which explain CAPs' duties and requirements.

State VR Agency

Individual state agency websites vary considerably in terms of content and organization. Most offer basic program and contact information. Several state agencies post information that is extremely relevant to SRCs, including annual performance reports, the current state plan for VR, and agency policy manuals.

RSA's Online Training Series

RSA recently developed an online training series for SRCs—located at <http://www.erehab.org/SRC/index.php>—which helps members understand the history, principles, and duties of both the VR program and SRCs. This self-directed, self-paced, multimedia training can be used individually or to supplement group presentations. The training series is particularly strong in

helping SRC members understand the VR state plan and the SRC's role in developing this plan and monitoring progress related to the plan's goals and objectives.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils

The website of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils—at <http://www.ncsrc.net/>—offers opportunities for SRCs to become more informed on their roles and makes available numerous tools, including a national listserv for members. This is the only national link that exists between state SRCs. The ability to discuss issues and concerns across states helps all SRCs be more fully informed on the VR system. The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils is an optional membership organization that individual SRCs can decide to participate in or not. Several resources are available to nonmembers as well as members. The coalition meets regularly by conference call and also schedules face-to-face meetings in conjunction with conferences held by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR).

Client Assistance Program

It is important for SRC members to understand the role of their state's CAP. CAPs are funded through grants from RSA. Every SRC is required to have a member from CAP, and this person does not have the same membership term limits. The purpose of CAP is to advise and inform clients, client applicants, and other individuals with disabilities of available services and benefits under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, CAP may assist and advocate for clients and client applicants in relation to projects, programs, and services provided under the Rehabilitation Act. CAPs can provide legal representation to individuals involved in formal appeal hearings with VR agencies. CAPs write an annual report for RSA that provides demographic information regarding individuals served, as well as information on outreach and systemic advocacy efforts.

These reports are an excellent source of information to SRCs for reviewing, analyzing, and advising VR programs. Information on CAPs is available on the RSA website at

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsacap/index.html>, and local CAPs can be found through the National Disability Rights Network website at

http://www.napas.org/aboutus/PA_CAP.htm. CAP regulations are available at

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/34cfr370_02.html.

Parent Training and Information Centers

Funded through the U.S. Department of Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, parent training and information centers provide training and assistance to the families of children (birth to 26) with all types of disabilities. Every state has one or more parent center. Most staff and board members are parents of children with disabilities. More information and local addresses for parent centers are available at

<http://www.taalliance.org/ptidirectory/index.asp>.

Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living

A representative from the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is also a required member of the SRC, and the SILC and the SRC are to partner and collaborate on issues of common concern. To most effectively work with the SILC, it is important for the SRC to understand the SILC's purpose, as well as the purpose of centers for independent living (CILs). Among other responsibilities, the SILC collaborates with the VR agency to develop the state plan for independent living. Detailed explanations of these aspects of the Rehabilitation Act and contact information for all SILCs and CILs nationwide can be found at <http://www.bcm.edu/ilru/html/publications/directory/SILC.html>.

Communication Tools

Many SRCs refer to, or have adopted, formal rules of order such as Robert's Rules of Order. Members' familiarity with the rules vary, as does each SRC's adherence to the rules. It may be helpful for SRCs to educate members on rules of order or provide easy references to help with meeting functioning. Information on Robert's Rules, including a quick reference, can be found on <http://www.robertsrules.org/>. Information is also provided in Appendix D.

SRCs may also want to offer members tips or guidelines regarding e-mail and conference call etiquette. These kinds of supports can help make council communication and meetings run smoothly and can also help with relationship building. A number of online resources can be located with a quick web search, and SRCs can use and modify what works best for their individual council.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR is composed of the chief administrators of the 80 public VR agencies serving eligible individuals with disabilities in states, the District of Columbia, and the territories. Their mission is to maintain and enhance a strong, effective, and efficient national program of public VR services which empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into our communities. CSAVR created the National Employment Team (the NET), a national network of the 80 public VR programs that supports a united or "one-company" approach to working with business customers. The NET's vision is "to create a coordinated approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specializes in employer development, business consulting, and corporate relations." The NET supports a dual customer base, meeting the employment needs of business through the qualified applicants and support services provided by the public VR system. VR consumers receive better career planning and employment

supports when VR works with business customers to better understand their needs and expectations.

It is important for SRC members to understand the relationship between their state's VR program and CSAVR. CSAVR provides leadership and insight on national trends and issues with the VR program. Also, SRC members are sometimes asked by their VR agency to represent their state and attend CSAVR conferences.

The National Council of State Rehabilitation Councils schedules its face-to-face meetings to coincide with the national CSAVR spring and fall conferences.

More information on CSAVR and its initiatives and positions is available at <http://www.rehabnetwork.org/>.

National Council of State Agencies for the Blind

The National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) is an organization comprising the administrators of state agencies and/or service delivery units within the larger state public VR programs responsible for the delivery of specialized services that enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve personal and vocational independence. This council provides a specialized forum for administrators of member agencies to study, deliberate, and act upon matters affecting rehabilitation and other services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. In addition, it is a resource for the formulation and expression of the collective points of view of member agencies on all issues affecting provision of services. Finally, the organization also serves as an advisory body to and establishes and maintains liaison with RSA and all other federal agencies as they develop policies and administer programs affecting services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

More information about the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind and its initiatives and positions is available at <http://www.ncsab.org/>. SRC members who are responsible for reviewing, analyzing, and advising VR programs and services for the blind and visually impaired should be informed about this organization. Not all SRCs have this responsibility. If the state has a separate agency for the blind, there is a separately designated

SRC or independent commission to attend to the matters regarding this separate agency.

Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation

The Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) is an organization comprising administrators of Native American rehabilitation programs. The purpose of the consortia is to study, deliberate, and act upon matters affecting rehabilitation, with the ultimate goal of expanding quality rehabilitation services to Native American persons with disabilities. The Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation serves as a resource for the formulation and expression of collective points of view of administrators for Native American rehabilitation on issues affecting rehabilitation on reservations, trust territories, Alaskan Native villages, and across the country and to disseminate these views to service providers, related facilities, companies, and concerned citizens. In addition, the consortia provides a means of communication with related organizations and governmental bodies on matters related to rehabilitation service provision, education, and research. SRCs from states with Native American VR programs should be informed on where to find information on the consortia's initiatives and positions:

<http://www.canar.org/index.php>.

Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers

There are 10 Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education and serving the 10 federal regions in the United States. These centers provide a broad integrated sequence of technical assistance and continuing education activities that focus on meeting recurrent and common training and organizational development needs for state VR agencies and their partners, including SRCs. The unique partnership of academic, governmental, and community expertise ensures a broad base of

knowledge and networks necessary to effectively deliver technical assistance and continuing education and support the mission of the state-federal rehabilitation program to enhance employment outcomes, independent functioning, and quality of life for people with disabilities. The TACE website is located at <http://www.tacene.org/national-tace>.

National Clearinghouse for Rehabilitation Training Materials

The National Clearinghouse for Rehabilitation Training Materials (<http://ncrtm.org/>) is sponsored by RSA and hosted by Utah State University. The clearinghouse serves the VR profession as a centralized resource for the development, collection, dissemination, and utilization of training materials; as a forum for advancing knowledge through applied research and open dialogue; and as a marketplace for career and staff development.

The mission of the clearinghouse is to advocate for the advancement of best practices in rehabilitation counseling through the development, collection, dissemination, and utilization of professional information, knowledge, and skill. Initiatives that may be developed under this rubric include (a) training material publication and archive; (b) technical assistance in training development; (c) distance-based continuing education; (d) professional recruitment/employment services; (e) professional networking and forums; (f) applied research and data warehousing; and (g) special events and projects.

Resources for Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

The SRC has a primary role in collaborating with the state VR agency on the consumer satisfaction survey design, as well as the analysis of survey results. The National Clearinghouse for Rehabilitation Training Materials offers a database of several different state consumer satisfaction surveys at <http://ncrtm.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=1816>. This information can be a helpful resource to SRC members as they review, analyze, and advise on this topic.

National Rehabilitation Association

The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) is a membership organization for professionals involved in the VR field. This association provides up-to-date information on advocacy, issues, and networking opportunities. It often writes about its positions on specific issues and posts them on its website, and this information might help inform a council on a matter of interest. The National Rehabilitation Association website is located at <http://www.nationalrehab.org/>.

Councils on Developmental Disabilities

Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through federal legislation to address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities regarding self-determination, independence, and community integration. Such councils exist in every state and territory, and sometimes they collaborate with SRCs on issues of common concern. Individual state contact information can be found at <http://www.nacdd.org/about-nacdd/councils-on-developmental-disabilities.aspx>.

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues

The Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) is a valuable resource for information relevant to all of the VR programs, as it publishes documents on an annual basis that are intended to address emerging VR topics and issues. Many of the publications remain very relevant to the VR programs today. The IRI is sponsored by RSA, CSAVR, and the TACE programs at the University of Arkansas, the George Washington University, and previously the University of Wisconsin–Stout. More recent publications are available at www.iriforum.org. A full list of IRI publications is included in Appendix F.

Disability.gov

Disability.gov is a national website managed by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in partnership with 21 other federal agencies. It offers comprehensive disability-related

resources on programs, services, laws, and regulations. Additionally, SRCs can search this database to obtain training resources to help enhance the functioning of SRCs. For instance, resources regarding disability etiquette, disability awareness, disability sensitivity, and person-first language can be found through this website using the search window. Many SRC members come to the SRC with specific content expertise, but they may need training and assistance with overall disability information. This website is located at <http://www.disability.gov/>.

U.S. Census Bureau: American FactFinder

The Census Bureau provides demographic information regarding specific communities within specific states, using American FactFinder:

http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

This information addresses population, disability, and race/ethnicity, as well as other relevant data elements. It is important for SRC members to have insight into their state's and community's demographics. State and community information from the Census Bureau can help identify unserved and underserved populations.

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) funds 10 regional ADA National Network Centers to provide training, guidance, and information on the ADA to their respective regional areas. The website,

<http://www.adata.org/Static/Home.aspx>, helps users locate their region's Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC). These centers are excellent resources to help SRCs and VR agencies understand the ADA and how it applies to their mission and goals.

U.S. Government Accountability Office

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is an independent nonpartisan agency that works for Congress and investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars. The GAO audits various federally funded agencies' operations for efficiency and effectiveness and reports on how well government programs and policies are meeting their goals and objectives. Because the VR program is federally funded, the GAO has written reports regarding the VR program and will write related reports in the future as the program evolves. The GAO also might research and report on related federally funded programs that could be relevant to the VR agency; an example would be Social Security. GAO reports might be of significant interest to the SRC, and SRC members might even be contacted as part of a GAO study. The most effective way to be in touch with the GAO on VR issues is to browse its website at <http://www.gao.gov/> by topic or agency or subscribe to its e-mail list and tailor the subscription to the topic or agency of interest.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is an employment program through Social Security to assist eligible beneficiaries with disabilities in going to work. Ticket to Work offers employment networks to give beneficiaries options for assistance with return to work. It is helpful for SRCs to understand how the Ticket to Work program relates to the VR program and other stakeholders (some of which might be employment networks).

The Ticket to Work website, <http://www.yourtickettowork.com/index>, provides a variety of resources, including information on programs related to the Ticket to Work legislation, a directory listing each state's work incentives planning and assistance grants, and a description of the work incentives planning and assistance services. Social Security regulations about earned income and available work incentives and support services are critical pieces of information in VR and therefore can be very relevant to the work of SRCs.

Assistive Technology Act Programs

RSA provides grants to states for the provision of comprehensive statewide programs of information and support for assistive technology. Assistive Technology Act programs often work closely with VR programs as a source of information, training, and consumer programs related to assistive technology. The state Assistive Technology Act program can be a source of information and guidance for the SRC, as it is an expert on the topic of assistive technology. More information, as well as contact information for each state assistive technology project, can be found at <http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/at/statecontacts.html>.

O*NET

O*NET (see <http://www.onetcenter.org/>) is a nationwide resource and database for occupational information. It provides information such as job qualifications, education/training requirements, and employment outlook information for various careers. SRCs may find the information valuable as they review and advise on topics such as program development.

Job Accommodations Network

The Job Accommodations Network (see <http://askjan.org/>), a service provided through ODEP, is a comprehensive resource for information and guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. VR programs often use this resource, and it is helpful for SRCs to be aware of it.

Office of Employment and Disability Policy

ODEP offers additional resources, programs, and information regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities; see <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>.

Protection and Advocacy Programs

Protection and Advocacy Programs—congressionally mandated, legally based disability rights organizations—are located in every state. These programs sometimes are umbrella organizations that include CAP, but not in every state. Protection and Advocacy Programs may be active in disability rights issues that are important to the SRC. A directory available at <http://www.ndrn.org/en/when-to-contact-your-state-paa-cap.html> provides the locations of these programs throughout the country.

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

NIDRR, funded through the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, offers comprehensive research information on topics of disability and rehabilitation.

- NIDRR is currently conducting research on effective VR program management, effective implementation of the Order of Selection, improving services to individuals with mental health and intellectual disabilities, and other areas of interest to the VR field. NIDRR usually presents some of their more important research studies at the CSAVR conferences.

More information regarding NIDRR can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html>.

VR Needs Assessment Guide

The *Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment Guide* (available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/resources.html#needs-assessment>)

and appendices from the U.S. Department of Education's RSA provide state VR agencies and SRCs with basic tools needed to meet the requirements of a fully developed comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

FY 2010 Monitoring Information Guide

The *State Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs Monitoring Information Guide* is one of a number of sources that RSA uses to help it fully understand how the VR and independent living programs operate within a state. This guide is available to state agencies and other interested parties in order to enhance the transparency of the review process and promote collaboration. The guide addresses key program areas, and its content is presented in the form of questions. Currently, RSA updates its monitoring protocols annually. Since FY 2011 information will be available by the time that this IRI document is published, we suggest that you contact RSA (RSA.ED.GOV) for additional information if you are unable to locate the most current guidance.

Annual Disability Statistics Compendium

The *Disability Statistics Compendium* is the first of what is intended to be an annual publication of statistics on people with disabilities and government programs that serve the population with disabilities. It is modeled after the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*, published yearly by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The compendium is designed to serve as a reference guide to government publications. At the bottom of each table, the source of data appearing in each table is presented. These referenced sources contain additional statistics and information about the way the data were collected and the statistics were generated. The compendium can be downloaded at www.DisabilityCompendium.org.

Conclusion

While this chapter has not included every available resource, it can serve as a reference tool for SRCs so they can better understand the full scope of resources available to the council, the VR program, and individuals with disabilities. Each SRC will define its resources according to what is most relevant to its state and program. These resources can be used as a starting point for orientation and training of SRC members and can also be

used to locate valuable tools to assist the SRC in carrying out its mandated duties.

Study Questions

1. You can find statistics regarding each state's performance on standards and indicators at the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) website.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The VR regulations are not an important source of information for SRCs, and so SRCs do not need to know where to find these regulations.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils is available to help SRCs become more informed on their roles and to network with SRCs nationwide on best practices and tools.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. A Client Assistance Program representative is a mandated member of the SRC and is not confined to membership term limits.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Data from the U.S. Census on states and local communities is irrelevant to the work of SRCs.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. SRC members will not need guidelines or training on disability etiquette.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, and the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation are similar organizations related to VR.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. The RSA website also provides other information relevant to SRCs, including
 - a. Information on the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
 - b. Information describing “unserved and underserved populations”
 - c. Contact information for RSA staff
 - d. All of the above

9. A list of IRI publications and study questions for CRC credit can be found at
 - a. CRCC.org
 - b. Iriforum.org
 - c. In the appendix of this publication
 - d. Both b and c

10. The RSA training series for SRCs
 - a. Is online
 - b. Is self-paced and self-directed
 - c. Can be used to supplement group presentations
 - d. All of the above

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Major RSA Policy Guidance Documents Related to the VR Program

Still in effect as of 7/30/2010. The full text is available at <http://rsa.ed.gov/index.cfm>. Go to “Information about RSA,” “Legislation and Policy,” and then “Sub-regulatory guidance.”

- **Implementation of Informed Choice** (RSA PD-01-03) (January 17, 2001)
- **Employment Goal for Individuals with a Disability** (RSA PD-97-04) (August 19, 1997)
- **Use of Program Income: Payments from Social Security Administration, Insurance Carriers, and Other Sources** (RSA PD-92-04) (December 6, 1991)
- **Provision of Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education by State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies** (RSA PD-92-02) (November 21, 1991)
- **Assessments of Individuals with Significant Disabilities Under the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program** (RSA TAC-02-01) (February 11, 2002)
- **Self-employment, Telecommuting, and Establishing a Small Business as Employment Outcomes** (RSA TAC-00-02) (July 24, 2000)
- **Responsibility of State VR Agencies in the Provision of Rehabilitation Technology** (RSA TAC-98-04) (September 29, 1998)
- **Applicability of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA] of 1996 to the Vocational**

Rehabilitation Services Program (RSA IM-01-44)
(September 25, 2001)

- **Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Services Under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended (RSA IM-93-17) (May 11, 1993)**
- **Role of Client Assistance Programs in Relation to the Americans with Disabilities Act (RSA PD-91-15) (August 9, 1991)**
- **What a Designated Client Assistance Program Agency Must Do to Satisfy the Mediation Procedures Requirement (RSA TAC-97-01) (February 24, 1997)**

Appendix B: Frequently Used Acronyms

- 121 programs:** Native American vocational rehabilitation
- 26:** Status designation for a successful closure in VR
- 504:** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which protects various civil rights of people with disabilities
- AA:** Alcoholics Anonymous
- ACB:** American Council for the Blind
- ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADHD:** Attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder
- ADL:** Activities of daily living
- AFB:** American Foundation for the Blind
- AFDC:** Aid to Families with Dependent Children; former name for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ALD:** Assistive listening device
- ALJ:** Administrative law judge
- AS:** Asperger's syndrome
- ASD:** Autism spectrum disorders
- ASL:** American Sign Language
- AT:** Assistive technology
- ATBCB:** Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
- BI:** Brain injury
- C&G:** Counseling and guidance
- CANAR:** Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation
- CAP:** Client Assistance Program
- CARF:** Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- CART:** Computer-assisted real-time translation
- CBO:** Congressional Budget Office [Snelling Center]
- CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations
- CI:** Cochlear implant
- CIL:** Center for independent living

COBRA: Comprehensive Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1986
CP: Cerebral palsy
CRC: Certified rehabilitation counselor
CRP: Community rehabilitation program
CSAVR: Council of State Administrators of Vocational
Rehabilitation
CSNA: Comprehensive statewide needs assessment
DD: Developmental disability
DDS: Disability determination services
DOE: Department of Education
DOL: Department of Labor
DOT: Department of Transportation
DSU: Designated state unit
EDGAR: Education Department General Administrative
Regulations
EE: Extended employment
EEOC: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FY: Fiscal year
GA: General assistance
GAO: Government Accountability Office
GSA: General Services Administration
HLAA: Hearing Loss Association of America
HRD: Human resources development
I&R: Information and referral
ID: Intellectual disability
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP: Individual education plan/program
IHO: Impartial hearing officer
IL: Independent living
IPE: Individualized plan for employment
IRI: Institute on Rehabilitation Issues
IRWE: Impairment-related work expense
JAN: Job Accommodations Network
JWOD: Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act
LPC: Licensed professional counselor
MIS: Management information systems
MOE: Maintenance of effort
MSW: Master of social work

NAD: National Association for the Deaf
NAMI: National Association of Mentally Ill
NAPAS: National Association of Protection and Advocacy System
NCD: National Council on Disability
NCIL: National Council on Independent Living
NCRE: National Council on Rehabilitation Education
NCSAB: National Council of State Administrators for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
NFB: National Federation for the Blind
NI: Neurologically impaired
NIDRR: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation
Research
NRA: National Rehabilitation Association
NRCA: National Rehabilitation Counseling Association
O&M: Orientation and mobility
ODEP: Office of Disability Employment Policy
OJT: On-the-job training
OMB: Office of Management and Budget
OSEP: Office of Special Education Programs
OSERS: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
(Federal)
OSS or OOS: Order of selection for services
OT: Occupational therapy
P&A: Protection and advocacy
PAAT: Protection and advocacy for assistive technology
PADD: Protection and advocacy for persons with developmental
disabilities
PAIMI: Protection and advocacy for individuals with mental
illness
PAIR: Protection and advocacy for individual rights
PASS: Plan for achieving self-support
PDD: Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified
PT: Physical therapy
PVE: Prevocational evaluation
PWI: Projects with industry
RCD: Rehabilitation counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing
RFP: Request for proposal
RSA: Rehabilitation Services Administration

SCD: Statewide coordinator of services for the deaf and hard of hearing
SCI: Spinal cord injury
SE: Supported employment
SGA: Substantial gainful activity
SILC: State Independent Living Council
SPIL: State plan for independent living
SRC: State Rehabilitation Council
SSA: Social Security Administration
SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI: Supplemental Security income
TACE: Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center
TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TBI: Traumatic brain injury
TTY: Text telephone
TWP: Trial work period
TWWIA: Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act
UCP: United cerebral palsy
USC: United States code
VA: Veterans' Administration
VR: Vocational rehabilitation
VSA: Very Special Arts
WIA: Workforce Investment Act
YES: Youth employment services

Appendix C: Section 361.17 Requirements for a State Rehabilitation Council

(Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34, Part 361- State Vocational
Rehabilitation Services Program)

If the State has established a Council under 34 CFR, Sec. 361.16(a)(2) or (b), the Council must meet the following requirements:

(a) Appointment.

- (1) The members of the Council must be appointed by the Governor or, in the case of a State that, under State law, vests authority for the administration of the activities carried out under this part in an entity other than the Governor (such as one or more houses of the State legislature or an independent board), the chief officer of that entity.
- (2) The appointing authority must select members of the Council after soliciting recommendations from representatives of organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities and organizations interested in individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the appointing authority must consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the Council.

(b) Composition.

- (1) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, the Council must be composed of at least 15 members, including—

- (i) At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council, who must be the chairperson or other designee of the Statewide Independent Living Council;
- (ii) At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 682(a) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (iii) At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program established under 34 CFR part 370, who must be the director of or other individual recommended by the Client Assistance Program;
- (iv) At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs who serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if employed by the designated State agency;
- (v) At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;
- (vi) Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
- (vii) Representatives of disability groups that include a cross section of—
 - (A) Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and
 - (B) Representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;
- (viii) Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
- (ix) In a State in which one or more projects are carried out under section 121 of the Act (American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services), at least one representative of the directors of the projects;
- (x) At least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this part and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (xi) At least one representative of the State workforce investment board; and

- (xii) The director of the designated State unit as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.
 - (2) Employees of the designated State agency. Employees of the designated State agency may serve only as nonvoting members of the Council. This provision does not apply to the representative appointed pursuant to paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section.
 - (3) Composition of a separate Council for a separate State agency for individuals who are blind. Except as provided in paragraph (b)(4) of this section, if the State establishes a separate Council for a separate State agency for individuals who are blind, that Council must—
 - (i) Conform with all of the composition requirements for a Council under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, except the requirements in paragraph (b)(1)(vii), unless the exception in paragraph (b)(4) of this section applies; and
 - (ii) Include—
 - (A) At least one representative of a disability advocacy group representing individuals who are blind; and
 - (B) At least one representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself.
 - (4) Exception. If State law in effect on October 29, 1992 requires a separate Council under paragraph (b)(3) of this section to have fewer than 15 members, the separate Council is in compliance with the composition requirements in paragraphs (b)(1)(vi) and (b)(1)(viii) of this section if it includes at least one representative who meets the requirements for each of those paragraphs.
- (c) Majority.**
- (1) A majority of the Council members must be individuals with disabilities who meet the requirements of Sec. 361.5(b)(29) and are not employed by the designated State unit.

(2) In the case of a separate Council established under Sec. 361.16(b), a majority of the Council members must be individuals who are blind and are not employed by the designated State unit.

(d) Chairperson. The chairperson must be—

- (1) Selected by the members of the Council from among the voting members of the Council, subject to the veto power of the Governor; or
- (2) In States in which the Governor does not have veto power pursuant to State law, the appointing authority described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section must designate a member of the Council to serve as the chairperson of the Council or must require the Council to designate a member to serve as chairperson.

(e) Terms of appointment.

- (1) Each member of the Council must be appointed for a term of no more than 3 years, and each member of the Council, other than a representative identified in paragraph (b)(1)(iii) or (ix) of this section, may serve for no more than two consecutive full terms.
- (2) A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the end of the term for which the predecessor was appointed must be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term.
- (3) The terms of service of the members initially appointed must be, as specified by the appointing authority as described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, for varied numbers of years to ensure that terms expire on a staggered basis.

(f) Vacancies.

- (1) A vacancy in the membership of the Council must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, except the appointing authority as described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section may delegate the authority to fill that vacancy to the

remaining members of the Council after making the original appointment.

- (2) No vacancy affects the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the Council.

- (g) **Conflict of interest.** No member of the Council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or the member's organization or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under State law.

- (h) **Functions.** The Council must, after consulting with the State workforce investment board—
 - (1) Review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the State unit's responsibilities under this part, particularly responsibilities related to—
 - (i) Eligibility, including order of selection;
 - (ii) The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
 - (iii) Functions performed by State agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this part;
 - (2) In partnership with the designated State unit—
 - (i) Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with Sec. 361.29(c); and
 - (ii) Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Secretary in accordance with Sec. 361.29(e);
 - (3) Advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities carried out under this part and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this part;
 - (4) To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—
 - (i) The functions performed by the designated State agency;
 - (ii) The vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible

- for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and
- (iii) The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes;
- (5) Prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Secretary no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year an annual report on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public through appropriate modes of communication;
 - (6) To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under 34 CFR part 364, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the State mental health planning council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act, and the State workforce investment board;
 - (7) Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and
 - (8) Perform other comparable functions, consistent with the purpose of this part, as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

(i) Resources.

- (1) The Council, in conjunction with the designated State unit, must prepare a plan for the provision of resources, including staff and other personnel, that may be necessary and sufficient for the Council to carry out its functions under this part.

- (2) The resource plan must, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan.
- (3) Any disagreements between the designated State unit and the Council regarding the amount of resources necessary to carry out the functions of the Council must be resolved by the Governor, consistent with paragraphs (i)(1) and (2) of this section.
- (4) The Council must, consistent with State law, supervise and evaluate the staff and personnel that are necessary to carry out its functions.
- (5) Those staff and personnel that are assisting the Council in carrying out its functions may not be assigned duties by the designated State unit or any other agency or office of the State that would create a conflict of interest.

(j) Meetings. The Council must—

- (1) Convene at least four meetings a year in locations determined by the Council to be necessary to conduct Council business. The meetings must be publicly announced, open, and accessible to the general public, including individuals with disabilities, unless there is a valid reason for an executive session; and
- (2) Conduct forums or hearings, as appropriate, that are publicly announced, open, and accessible to the public, including individuals with disabilities.

(k) Compensation. Funds appropriated under Title I of the Act, except funds to carry out sections 112 and 121 of the Act, may be used to compensate and reimburse the expenses of Council members in accordance with section 105(g) of the Act.

(Authority: Section 105 of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 725)

Appendix D: Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

What is parliamentary procedure?

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Why is parliamentary procedure important?

Because it's a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order newly revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations, and other groups. So it's important that everyone know these basic rules!

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

- Call to order
- Roll call of members present
- Reading of minutes of last meeting
- Officers' reports
- Committee reports
- Special orders: Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire

membership can take action on or a stand on an issue. Individual members can

- Call to order
- Second motions
- Debate motions
- Vote on motions

There are four basic types of motions:

- *Main motions:* The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. Main motions cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
- *Subsidiary motions:* Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and they are voted on before a main motion.
- *Privileged motions:* Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
- *Incidental motions:* Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions, and they must be considered before the other motion.

How are motions presented?

1. *Obtain the floor.*
 - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - b. Rise and address the chairman by saying “Mr. Chairman” or “Mr. President.”
 - c. Wait until the chairman recognizes you.
2. *Make your motion.*
 - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
 - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, “I move that we . . .” rather than “I move that we do not. . . .”
 - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. *Wait for someone to second your motion.*
4. *Another member will second your motion or the chairman will call for a second.*
5. *If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.*
6. *The chairman states your motion.*

- a. The chairman will say, “It has been moved and seconded that we . . .” thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
 - b. The membership then either debates your motion or may move directly to a vote.
 - c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman, it becomes “assembly property” and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
7. *Expanding on your motion*
- a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
 - b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
 - c. All comments and debate must be directed to the chairman.
 - d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
 - e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the chairman.
8. *Putting the question to the membership*
- a. The chairman asks, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”
 - b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
 - c. On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

Voting on a Motion

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the bylaws or policy of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations:

- *By voice.* The chairman asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no.” Any member may move for an exact count.
- *By roll call.* Each member answers “yes” or “no” as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person’s vote is required.
- *By general consent.* When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairman says, “If there is no objection . . .” The membership shows agreement by their silence;

however, if one member says, “I object,” the item must be put to a vote.

- *By division.* This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
- *By ballot.* Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This method is used when secrecy is desired.

Two other motions are commonly used that relate to voting.

- *Motion to table.* This motion is often used in the attempt to “kill” a motion. The option is always present, however, to “take from the table,” for reconsideration by the membership.
- *Motion to postpone indefinitely.* This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of a motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly.

- Allow motions that are in order.
- Have members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Obey the rules of debate.

Most importantly, *be courteous!*

The full text of Robert’s Rules of Order can be downloaded at <http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror--00.htm>.

Appendix E: What Are Other SRCs Doing? Where Can I Find Examples?

This appendix provides examples of various SRC reports and approaches to formalized SRC organization. There are no prescribed guidelines for these activities, and SRCs therefore often ask for examples from other SRCs. There are many formats and approaches. The following examples are not intended as templates, just individual state approaches.

SRC annual reports and other reports, as well as state structures and other useful information, are available on individual state agency websites, which are referenced as links in Section 1.

This appendix has eight sections:

Section 1. Individual SRC websites

Section 2. Example of SRC bylaws (Wisconsin)

Section 3. Example of SRC operating procedures (Oklahoma)

Section 4. Example of SRC handbook (New Jersey General SRC)

Section 5. Example of state plan section 4.2(c) (Virginia Blind SRC)

Section 6. Example of notebook for RSA monitoring visit (West Virginia)

Section 7. Example worksheet: Membership composition mandates (for tracking)

Section 8. Example worksheet: Report card on Section 361.16 (h) functions and (i) resources

Section 1: Individual SRC Websites

From the website of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils: <http://www.ncsrc.net>.

State	Type	Link
Alabama		http://www.rehab.state.al.us/Home/default.aspx?url=/Home/Services/VRS/State+Rehabilitation+Council/Main
Alaska		http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/home.htm
Arizona		https://www.azdes.gov/main.aspx?menu=32&id=1310
Arkansas		http://www.arsinfo.org/default.aspx?id=25
California		http://www.rehab.ca.gov/exec/srcmeet.htm
Colorado		http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/dvr/hm_cou_srcMbrInfo.htm
Connecticut	Blind	http://www.ct.gov/besb/cwp/view.asp?a=2845&q=331406
	General	http://www.brs.state.ct.us/programs_pg4.htm
Delaware	Blind	* http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dvi/index.html
	General	http://www.delawareworks.com/src/main.shtml
Florida	Blind	http://dbs.myflorida.com/open-government/councils.php#Rehab
	General	http://www.rehabworks.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=SubMain.FRC
Georgia		www.srcgeorgia.com
Hawaii		http://hawaiiivr.org/about/partners.html
Idaho		http://www.vr.idaho.gov/state_rehabilitation_council.shtml
Illinois		http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=36542
Indiana		http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2763.htm
Iowa	Blind	* http://www.blind.state.ia.us/administration/commission
	General	http://www.ivrs.iowa.gov/partners/SRC/staterehabcouncil.html
Kansas		http://www.srskansas.org/rehab/text/SRC.htm
Kentucky	Blind	* http://blind.ky.gov/
	General	http://ovr.ky.gov/Statewide%20Council%20for%20Voc.%20Rehab/SCVR%20Main.htm
Louisiana		http://www.louisianarehabassoc.com/id20.html
Maine	Blind	http://www.maine.gov/rehab/advisory_councils/i

State	Type	Link
		ndex.shtml#dbvi_src
	General	http://mainesrc.org/home
Maryland		http://www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/SRC/
Massachusetts	Blind	* http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2agencyclanding&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions&L3=Massachusetts+Commission+for+the+Blind&sid=Eeohhs2
	General	http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2subtopic&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Disability+Services&L3=Disability+Community+Advocacy&L4=Massachusetts+State+Rehabilitation+Council&sid=Eeohhs2
Michigan	Blind	http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-28077_28313_34884---,00.html
	General	http://www.mrccouncil.org
Minnesota	Blind	http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/Blind_or_Visually_Impaired/State_Rehabilitation_Council_for_the_Blind/State_Rehabilitation_Council_for_the_Blind.aspx
	General	http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/JobSeekers/People_with_Disabilities/For_Our_Partners/State_Rehabilitation_Council.aspx
Mississippi		http://www.mdrs.state.ms.us/about/SRC_page.aspx
Missouri	Blind	http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/srcb.htm
	General	http://dese.mo.gov/vr/src.htm
Montana		http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/vocrehab/rehabilitationcouncil/index.shtml
Nebraska		http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/src/index.html
Nevada		http://detr.state.nv.us/Rehab%20pages/rehab%20council.htm
New Hampshire	Blind	* http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/VR/BlindandVisuallyImpaired.htm
	General	http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/VR/AdvisoryCouncils.htm#council
New Jersey	Blind	* http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/home/
	General	http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/dvrs/DVRIndex.html
New Mexico	Blind	http://www.cfb.state.nm.us/Commissioners.html
	General	* http://www.dvrgetsjobs.com/Pages/Index.aspx
New York	Blind	http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh/state_rehab.asp

State	Type	Link
	General	http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/src/
North Carolina	Blind	http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dsb/comrehab.htm
	General	http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/councils/vrcouncil.htm
North Dakota		http://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/councils-partners/ndsrc.html
Ohio		http://gcpd.ohio.gov/
Oklahoma		http://www.okrehabcouncil.org/
Oregon		http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/vr/oregonrehabcncl/
Pennsylvania		http://www.parac.org/index.html
Rhode Island	Blind	http://www.ors.state.ri.us/copied/Governors_Advisory_Council_for_the_Blind.htm
	General	http://www.ors.state.ri.us/SRC.html
South Carolina	Blind	* http://www.sccb.state.sc.us/
	General	http://www.scvrd.net/a_leader.html
South Dakota		http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/vrboard/vrboard.aspx
Tennessee		http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/rehab/cc1.html
Texas		http://www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/rct.shtml
Utah		http://www.usor.utah.gov/councils/src
Vermont	Blind	http://www.dbvi.vermont.gov/src
	General	http://www.dail.state.vt.us/dvr/RehabilitationCouncil/SRC.htm
Virginia	Blind	http://www.odcbvi.org/
	General	http://www.va-src.org/
Washington	Blind	http://www.dsb.wa.gov/whoWeAre/SRC/default.htm#contentTop
	General	http://www.wastrehabcouncil.org/
West Virginia		http://www.wv-src.org/WVSRC_MENU.htm
Wisconsin		http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/wrc/
Wyoming		http://wyomingworkforce.org/aboutus/partners_assoc_src.aspx
Territories		
Samoa		* http://americansamoa.gov/departments/depts/hs_s.htm
Northern Mariana Islands		* http://ovrgov.net/
District of Columbia		http://dds.dc.gov/dds/cwp/view,A,3,Q,496870.asp

*Contact through this site.

The NCSRC website has other useful information, including NCSRC history, members, meetings, strategic plan, resolution, teams, and a listserv. It also has information about the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, state SRC contact information, online training modules for SRCs, other resources for SRCs, and frequently asked questions.

**Section 2:
Example of SRC Bylaws (Wisconsin)**

**By-Laws of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council
Relating to Individuals with Disabilities Rehabilitation
Program
Pursuant to Executive Order #196**

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, hereinafter called WRC.

**ARTICLE II
Purpose**

Pursuant to Executive Order #196, issued July 1, 1992 by the Governor of Wisconsin, signed into law the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended through the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (“the Act”) as part of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998.

FURTHERMORE, Title I, Section 105 of the Act required the Governor of the State of Wisconsin to establish a state rehabilitation advisory Council with responsibility to review, analyze, and advise the designated State Agency which administers the public rehabilitation program on its performance and

FURTHERMORE, that the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development is the designated State Unit and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is the designated State Agency.

**ARTICLE III
The Council**

The duties of this Council are to:

- A. Establish the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council for the State of Wisconsin consisting of twenty-four members each appointed (not including the Division Administrator) for a maximum of two consecutive full terms of three years as required by Executive Order #196 of the Governor.
- B. The Council shall elect officers from among its members.
- C. The Council shall be composed of:
 - 1. At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council (chairperson or other designee of SILC).
 - 2. At least one representative of a parent training and information center established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
 - 3. At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program.
 - 4. At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational programs (who shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the State Council if the counselor is an employee of the designated State Agency).
 - 5. At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers.
 - 6. Four representatives of business, industry, and labor.
 - 7. Representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of:
 - a. Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory and mental disabilities; and,
 - b. Individuals' representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable, due to their disabilities, to represent themselves.
 - 8. Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.
 - 9. At least one representative of the directors of projects carried out under section 121.
 - 10. At least one representative of Department of Public Instruction.
 - 11. At least one representative of the State Workforce Investment Board.

12. Ex officio member: The Administrator of the designated State Agency shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of the Council.

D. Appointment

Members of the Council shall be appointed by the Governor. The Council will forward recommendations to the Governor after soliciting recommendations from the representatives of organizations representing the broad range of individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the Governor shall consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the Council. (See Addendum 1)

E. Qualifications

A majority of Council members shall be persons who are:

1. Individuals with disabilities; and,
2. Not employed by the designated State Unit or Agency.

F. Terms of Appointments

1. Each member of the Council shall be appointed for a term of no more than three years and may serve for no more than two consecutive full terms.
2. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the end of the term for which a predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term.

G. Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Council shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. No vacancy shall affect the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the Council.

H. Functions of Council

The Council shall, after consulting with the State Workforce Investment Board:

1. Review, analyze, and advise the designated State Unit regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the Unit under this title, particularly responsibilities relating to:
 - a. Eligibility (including order of selection);

- b. The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and,
 - c. Functions performed by State agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this title.
- 2. In partnership with the designated State Unit:
 - a. Develop, agree to and review State goals and priorities in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(C); and,
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(E).
- 3. Advise the designated State Agency and the designated State Unit regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this title, and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments and evaluations required by this title.
- 4. To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with:
 - a. The functions performed by the designated State Agency;
 - b. Vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public or private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act; and,
 - c. Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such other employment outcomes.
- 5. Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public.
- 6. Coordinate activities with the activities of other Councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council, the advisory panel of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Developmental Disabilities Council described in the Developmental

Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the State Mental Health Planning Council established under the Public Health Service Act, and the State Workforce Investment Board.

7. Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the State Agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State.
8. Perform such other functions, consistent with the purpose of this title, as the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.
9. Review, revise and direct the designated State Agency in its selection, operation and procedure of the Impartial Hearing Officer program.

I. Resources

1. Plan. The Council shall prepare, in conjunction with the Designated State Unit, a plan for the provision of such resources, including such staff and other personnel as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Council under this section.
2. Supervision and Evaluation. The Council shall, consistent with law, supervise and evaluate such staff and other personnel as may be necessary to carry out its functions under this section.

J. Conflict of Interest

No member of the Council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under State law.

K. Meetings

The Council shall convene at least 4 meetings a year in such places as it determines to be necessary to conduct Council business and conduct such forums or hearings as the Council considers appropriate. The meetings, hearings, and forums shall be publicly announced. The meetings shall be open and

accessible to the general public unless there is a valid reason for an executive session.

L. Compensation and Expenses

The Council may use funds appropriated under this title to reimburse members of the Council for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care and personal assistance services), and to pay compensation to a member of the Council, if such member is not employed or must forfeit wages from other employment, for each day the member is engaged in performing the duties of the Council (See Addendum 2).

**ARTICLE IV:
Offices**

The principal office of this Council in the State of Wisconsin shall be located in the City of Madison, County of Dane. The Council shall have such other offices within or without the County of Dane as the Council may require from time to time.

A. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Council shall be held in the second quarter of each year, beginning with the year 1993, for the purpose of electing officers and transacting other business that may come before the Council. If the election of the Officers shall not be held at the annual meeting, or at any adjourned meeting hereof, the Executive Board shall cause the election to be held at any meeting of the Council as soon thereafter as convenient.

B. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the chair, by the Executive Committee, or by not less than 51% of all of the Council members of WRC.

C. Place of Meetings

The Council may designate any place within the State of Wisconsin as a place of meeting for any annual meeting or for any special meeting called by the Council. If no designation is made, the meeting shall be held in Madison, Wisconsin.

D. Notice of Meetings

Written, printed, taped or Braille notice of any meetings shall be delivered to each member not less than ten days, nor more than forty days, before the date of such meeting. The notice shall state the place, day, and hour and the purpose of the meeting. If mailed, such notices shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the Council member at the address that appears on its records with postage there prepaid.

E. Lists

The Officer or Agent having charge of the minutes and records of the Council shall make, at least ten days before each meeting of the Council members, a complete list of the Council members entitled to vote at such meeting, arranged in alphabetical order, with the address of said Council member. Furthermore, the minutes of the prior meeting shall be contained therein. All minutes of all other prior meetings from the date of the inception of this Council shall be subject to inspection by any Council member during the whole time of the meeting. The original ledger of Council members, or duplicate thereof, shall be prima facie evidence as to who are the Council members of the WRC and who are entitled to vote. The public may examine such lists or such ledger to any meeting of the Council.

F. Quorum

A majority of the Council members, excluding ex officio members, represented in person shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of WRC, provided, that if less than a majority of the Council members are represented at any said meeting, a majority of the Council members represented may adjourn the meeting from time to time with notice. If a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of the majority of the Council members

represented at the meeting shall be the act of all the Council members.

G. Proxies

At all meetings of WRC, a Council member may not vote by proxy.

H. Voting by Executive Committee

Subject to the provisions of this Article, each member of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to one vote upon each matter submitted to vote at a meeting of the Executive Committee except ex officio members may not vote.

I. Inspectors

At any meeting of the Council, the Chair of the meeting may, or upon the request of any Council member, shall appoint one or more persons as inspectors for such meeting. Such inspectors shall ascertain and report the number of Council members represented at the meeting. The inspectors shall count all votes and report the results, and do such other acts as are proper to conduct the election and voting with impartiality and fairness to all the Council members. Each report of an inspector shall be in writing and signed by him/her or by a majority of them if there be more than one inspector acting at such meeting. If there is more than one inspector, the report of a majority shall be the report of the inspectors. The report of the inspector or inspectors on the number of the Council members represented at the meeting and the results of the voting shall be prima facie evidence thereof.

J. Voting by Ballot

Voting on any question or in any election may be by voice unless the presiding officer shall order, or any Council member shall demand, that voting be by ballot.

K. Attendance Requirement

Council members shall attend all Council meetings on a regular basis. Any member missing two consecutive meetings without due cause shall be contacted by the Executive Committee to

determine his/her continued interest in serving on the Council. The missing of three consecutive meetings without due cause will result in the Executive Committee forwarding a recommendation for removal to the Governor.

L. Committees

The Council shall have three standing committees. They shall be: the Executive Committee, Evaluations Committee, and Reports Committee. The Evaluations Committee shall be responsible for evaluating consumer satisfaction and the service provision. The Reports Committee shall be responsible for working with the Designated State Unit on the State Plan and for writing the Annual Report.

**ARTICLE V:
Executive Committee**

A. General Powers

The business and affairs of the Council shall be managed by its Executive Committee.

B. Number, Tenure and Qualifications

Members of the Executive Committee shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Council or until his successor shall have been elected and qualified. Members of the Executive Committee must be residents of the State of Wisconsin. The members of the Executive Committee shall be the officers of the Council and chair or other representative of each standing committee.

C. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held.

D. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by or at the request of the Chair or by at least 50% of the Executive Committee members. The person authorized to call special meetings of the Executive Committee may fix any

place, either within or without Dane County, as the place for holding any special meeting called by the Executive Committee.

E. Notice

Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least ten days previous thereto by written notice delivered personally, mailed or by facsimile to each member of the Executive Committee at his business address. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail so addressed, with postage thereon prepaid. Any members of the Executive Committee may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of any executive member at any meeting shall constitute waiver of notice of such meeting, except where an executive member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Executive Committee need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

F. Quorum

A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at any meeting of the Executive Committee, provided that if less than a majority of such number of the Executive Committee are present at said meeting, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.

G. Manner of Acting

The act of the majority of the Executive Committee present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Executive Committee.

H. Compensation Expense

The Executive Committee may use funds appropriated under this title to reimburse members of the Executive Committee for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Executive Committee meetings and performing Executive Committee

duties (including child care and personal assistance services), and to pay compensation to a member of the Executive Committee, if such member is not employed or must forfeit wages from other employment, for each day the member is engaged in performing the duties of the Executive Committee.

I. Presumption of Assent

An Executive Committee member of the Council who is present at any meeting of the Executive Committee, at which action on any Council matter is taken shall be conclusively presumed to have assented to the action taken unless his/her dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting or unless he/she shall file his written dissent to such action with the person acting as secretary of the meeting before the adjournment thereof or shall forward such dissent by registered mail to the secretary of the Council immediately after the adjournment of the meeting. Such right to dissent shall not apply to any Executive Committee member who voted in favor of such action.

J. Attendance Requirements

Members shall be expected to attend Executive Committee meetings on a regular basis. Any member missing two consecutive meetings shall be contacted by the Chair to determine his/her continued interest in serving on the Executive Committee. The missing of three consecutive meetings without due cause shall be construed as a de facto resignation.

**ARTICLE VI:
Officers**

A. As a Group

1. It is the responsibility of the officers to ensure that WRC functions fully to accomplish its vision and mission.
2. They should stimulate, facilitate and request the active participation of each Council member.

3. They should communicate extensively with DVR management and staff about all issues of mutual concern whenever they arise and keep the Council aware of the status of those issues.
4. Working with the Executive Committee, the officers monitor the overall effectiveness of the Council, assuring that policies, procedures and practices implement the Council's goals.
5. Provide a bridge between the committees of the Council.

B. Number

The officers of the Council shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer. Any two or more offices may not be held by the same person. An ex officio member may not be an officer of the Council.

C. Election and Term of Office

The officers of the Council shall be elected annually at the annual meeting thereof. If the election of the officers is not held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as conveniently may be. Each officer shall hold office until such time his successor shall have been duly elected and shall be qualified or until his death or until he shall resign or shall have been removed in the manner hereinafter provided. Election or appointment of an officer or agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

D. Removal

Any officer or Council member, elected or appointed, may be removed by the Governor.

E. Vacancies

Any vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the Council as a whole for the unexpired portion of the term.

F. Chair

1. Functions as the principal executive officer and has general supervision and control of all business and affairs of the Council.
2. Needs to keep current on important disability issues in Wisconsin regarding clients and DVR.
3. Assures that important issues come before the Council in an expeditious manner and that minor issues do not disproportionately occupy the Council's limited meeting time.
 - a. Working with the Executive Committee, sets an agenda for each meeting.
 - b. Presides over general sessions of the Council, assuring that the agenda is accomplished, leading the group through the decision-making process.
4. Presides at meetings of the Executive Committee of the Council and at meetings with DVR staff.
5. Represents the Council in official matters to other organizations and persons. Or, may designate the Vice-Chair or an alternate to do so.
6. Signs documents authorized by the Council or required by law.
7. Develops and signs correspondence on behalf of the Council as appropriate.
8. Performs other duties incidental to the office or prescribed by the Council or by the Governor.

G. Vice-Chair

1. In the absence of the Chair, or in the event of the Chair's inability or refusal to act, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair; and when doing so, shall have all the powers of and be subject to the restrictions upon the Chair.
2. May assist the Chair in the performance of the Chair's duties, as requested by the Chair; and perform other projects and assignments as requested by the Chair or the Council. (This will aid in keeping the Vice-Chair actively involved in the Council's affairs and abreast of leading issues of concern to the Council.)
3. Acts as parliamentarian for the Council by becoming familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.

H. Treasurer

1. Prepares an annual budget and reports on its status at each meeting of the council.
 - a. Presides over the budget development process.
 - b. Works with DVR support staff to track the budget.
 - c. Works with committee chairs on budget issues.
2. Performs duties incidental to the office of Treasurer or as may from time to time be assigned by the Chair or the Council.

I. Secretary

1. Keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Council or the Executive Committee.
2. Assures that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws or as required by law.
3. Is custodian of the Council records.
4. Keeps a register of the post office address of each Council member which shall be furnished to the Secretary by the Council members.
5. Mails to the members of the Council, within two weeks of a meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting.
6. At least two weeks prior to any regular meeting of the Council, mails an agenda and all relevant materials to all members.
7. Contacts major media sources concerning the upcoming meeting, providing a copy of the agenda.
8. Performs all duties incidental to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Chair, Governor, or by the Council.

ARTICLE VII: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of this Council shall begin on the first day of September in each year and end on the last day of August of each year.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

These by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed by new by-laws adopted at any meeting of the Council and by a majority vote of the members present.

ARTICLE XI

WRC has been organized pursuant to the Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Wisconsin and the Council shall be subject to by-laws herein (stating the laws of the State of Wisconsin) and Robert's Rules of Order as revised.

ARTICLE X

The Council shall provide advisory and planning efforts to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. It shall further file an Annual Report with the Governor of its findings as to the operations of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and its services to the consumers thereof. The Council shall further encourage and support the coordination and cooperation of any and all agencies that deal with or are concerned with the issues of education and vocational rehabilitation and shall perform a consumers' satisfaction survey which shall be included in its Annual Report. Such report to be given to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Federal Government. The Council shall further seek wide input to insure compliance with the regulations of the United States government, Wisconsin Administrative Code, and foremost, the recipients of such services provided by such organization or organizations. The Council shall from time to time review the process of Order of Selection and transition as provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Public Instruction of the State of Wisconsin. The Council is to instruct the Division to work with private agencies, public agencies, or any such agencies that can best

benefit the provider of services of vocational rehabilitation to the citizens of the State of Wisconsin.

**ARTICLE XI:
Notice to the Public**

The Council shall ensure that the public be made aware of the existence of this Council, the purpose of this Council, the intent of this Council, and the time and place of meetings of this Council. Such notices shall be given in writing, Braille, or tape, telephonically, or visually as the case may be such that the most number of citizens and consumers of vocational rehabilitation services in the state of Wisconsin or the wards, parents, or guardians are made aware of same and such shall be in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law as revised.

**ARTICLE XII:
Conduction of Meetings**

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise provided herein.

Conflict of Interest. No Council member shall vote on any matter which in any way could financially or personally give them gain or advancement. Whenever Council member has cause to believe that a matter to be voted upon would involve him or her in a conflict of interest he or she shall announce same and refrain from voting on such matters.

Approved:

Chair, Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Approved:

Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Section 3: Example of SRC Operating Procedures (Oklahoma)

I. Membership

A. Recruitment

1. The proposed applicant will receive application forms within 10 days of their acceptance to be on ORC
2. Applicant will complete and submit all forms to the Program Manager (PM) within 30 days of receipt of application
3. PM responsibilities
 - a) Submit completed applications to Governor's Appointment Director within 5 days
 - b) Maintain pool of prospective candidates in appropriate membership composition categories
 - c) Attend events that may lend opportunities for recruiting new members
 - d) Annual communication with Governor's Appointment Director to ensure membership composition

B. Orientation

1. Explain roles and responsibilities of new member(s) by utilizing the RSA's Training Series I, History and Philosophy
2. Assist new member in making a committee selection at orientation
3. New member must complete remaining RSA Series II and III within 90 days and provide Certificate of Completion to PM
4. PM is responsible for conducting orientation to new member prior to the attendance of first quarterly meeting, but within 30 days of appointment, whichever comes first

C. Member Roles and Responsibilities

1. Attend quarterly meetings and annual meeting regularly

2. If a member has three unexcused absences, within their appointment term, the Executive Committee (EC) may request a letter of resignation from ORC member
3. Active committee participation through meeting attendance, in-person or conference call, and research if needed
4. Notification to PM regarding any absence(s)

D. Replacement

1. Term limits as determined in By-Laws
2. Resignation
 - a) EC may request voluntary resignation of any member who fails to carry out their council responsibilities (i.e., 3 unexcused absences at quarterly or committee meetings, disruptive behavior at meetings, personal agenda that is not in keeping with the ORC mission, etc.)
3. PM Responsibilities
 - a) 3 months prior to member term limit – PM will provide to EC a list of any first or second term limited members
 - b) PM and EC will review to ensure timely replacement
 - c) PM will contact the members to communicate either continuance or term limit with last meeting responsibility
 - d) PM will contact Governor’s Appointment Director to provide either continuance or new appointment information
 - e) PM will contact any potential new member(s) to discuss membership interest within 5 days of EC recommendation

II. Responsibilities of ORC Chair

A. Attendance

1. All meetings with Director and Division Administrators
2. All EC and Quarterly meetings
3. Committee meetings when possible
4. At least one of each set of the Public Hearings (State Plan and Policy)

5. At least one CSAVR meeting annually
 6. The Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol annually
 7. The in-state legislative visits, whenever possible
- B. 10 business days prior to quarterly meeting, ORC Chair will provide PM with written report summarizing quarterly activities or recommendations to vote on any action items**

III. Committees Chairs

A. Executive Committee

1. Within 2 weeks prior to annual Strategic Planning Committee Meeting, EC will review the purpose/function of each committee to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the ORC
2. Implement Nomination Committee process
3. Approval of nominees
4. If necessary recommend to the Governor's office removal of any current member(s)
5. Ensure a committee is assigned to meet the requirements of Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act with regard to the following annual activities:
 - a) Public Hearings
 - b) State Plan
 - c) Comprehensive Needs Assessment
 - d) Customer Satisfaction
 - e) Annual Report
 - (i) Review draft of annual report within 7 business days of receipt.
6. Attendance
 - a) Meetings with Director and Division Administrators, when possible
 - b) At a minimum 3 of the Quarterly meetings and EC meetings
 - c) At the yearly Strategic Planning meeting
 - d) Committee Chair will appoint committee member to report at quarterly meeting in the event of their absence
7. PM responsibilities
 - a) 10 days prior to ORC Executive meeting with Division Administrators and Director, PM will send

request for agenda items to include on the shared agenda

- b) Have minutes of Division Administrators and Director meetings completed and sent to attendees

B. Policy and Legislative Committee

1. Facilitate a minimum of 4 committee meetings annually
2. Attendance
 - a) At a minimum of 3 of the Quarterly meetings and EC meetings
 - b) Meetings with Director and Division Administrators, when possible
 - c) To at least one of the Public Hearings on Policy, annually
 - d) To the spring CSAVR meeting annually
 - e) The Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol annually
 - f) The in-state legislative visits, when possible
3. Active participation on the DRS Policy Re-engineering Committee
4. 10 business days prior to quarterly meeting, Chair will provide PM with written report summarizing quarterly activities or recommendations to vote on any action items

C. Transition and Employment Committee

1. Facilitate a minimum of 4 committee meetings annually
2. Attendance
 - a) At a minimum of 3 of the Quarterly meetings and EC meetings
 - b) Meetings with Director and Division Administrators, when possible
 - c) The Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol annually
3. Active participation on the Oklahoma Transition Council
4. Must participate at the annual Oklahoma Transition Institute
5. 10 business days prior to quarterly meeting, Chair will provide PM with written report summarizing quarterly

activities or recommendations to vote on any action items

D. Program and Planning Committee

1. Facilitate a minimum of 4 committee meetings annually
2. Attendance
 - a) At a minimum of 3 of the Quarterly meetings and EC meetings
 - b) Meetings with Director and Division Administrators, when possible
 - c) At least one of the Public Hearings on State Plan, annually
 - d) The Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol annually, when possible
3. Active participation on the DRS State Plan meetings
4. Active participation on the DRS Comprehensive Needs Assessment development initiative
5. Analyze the trends of the Customer Satisfaction Survey
6. 10 business days prior to Quarterly meeting, Chair will provide PM with written report summarizing quarterly activities or recommendations to vote on any action items

IV. Committee

- A. Committees will carry out their objectives** as determined through the ORC Annual Strategic Plan
- B. Each committee will submit a final report** at the last quarterly meeting of the fiscal year, with regard to the committee's accomplishments, challenges and recommendations for inclusion in the annual report
- C. Ad hoc committees will comply** with Standard Operating Procedures
- D. PM Responsibilities**
 1. Within 30 days of each quarterly meeting, seek input from Committee members to determine next committee meeting date and assist with scheduling committee meeting
 2. Provide each committee member, when possible, with a 2 week advance meeting notification

3. Track activities for each committee—assign time lines when needed
4. Provide written notes of all meetings and submit to committee chairs within 5 business days

V. *Quarterly/Annual Meetings*

A. Preparation—PM Responsibilities

1. 10 days prior to Quarterly meeting send reminder to Field Coordinators with the reporting template with a return deadline for template to be included in meeting packet
2. Assist with preparation of any agenda or other documentation to ensure individual accommodations
3. 30 days prior to quarterly meeting, request quarterly reports from all committee chairs with a due date no later than 10 business days prior to meeting but never to be later than 7 business days prior to meeting
4. 30 days prior to quarterly meeting, request all needed materials, documentation, reports from Division Administrators and other appropriate agency personnel with a due date no later than 10 business days prior to meeting but never to be later than 7 days prior to meeting
5. Provide quarterly meeting notification to entire membership 5 business days prior to meeting—meeting notification should include electronic packet which contains agenda, draft minutes, committee reports and any other necessary documentation to conduct business
6. Provide for interpreter/food/room arrangement/materials accommodation needs and meet Open Meeting Act requirements

B. Post Meeting—PM Responsibilities

1. Within one week of quarterly meeting, PM will follow up on any action items or issues that were discussed during the meeting
2. Within 30 days of quarterly meeting, PM will provide Chair with draft of quarterly meeting minutes
3. Repeat preparation process

VI. Annual Report

A. PM Responsibilities

1. Complete draft of annual report 30 days after end of fiscal year and share with EC
2. Once approved by the full ORC, prepare for print
3. Submit final annual report to RSA and all stakeholders as outlined in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act by December 31st of each year
4. Post on the ORC web site

VII. Accommodations

B. ORC will act consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Oklahoma 508 law

1. Facilities barrier free
2. Provide for reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities who request them
 - a) unless the ORC can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity
3. Take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others
4. Provide appropriate auxiliary aids, services, including personal assistant services, driver services, interpreter services, reader services, etc. during their term of membership
5. Primary consideration to the requests of the individual with disabilities
6. The individual requesting the accommodation must specify the type of accommodation to the ORC PM in a reasonable time frame to allow for the accommodation to be provided when requested
7. Assistive Technology purchased for members remains the property of the ORC

Section 4: Example of SRC Handbook (New Jersey General SRC)

New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services State Rehabilitation Council Handbook

Compiled by: Lydia R. Lofton
Frank Herron

Beliefs

As members of the State Rehabilitation Council of the State of New Jersey, *we believe*—

- People with disabilities, like all people, have diverse strengths that must be defined and identified along many dimensions;
- Each person with a disability has value;
- In a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it;
- In partnerships, affiliations, and linkages;
- That optimal results in rehabilitation depend on an equal partnership between consumers and the professional (service provider);
- That all consumers should be given enough information to make informed choices;
- People with disabilities are ultimately responsible and accountable for the choices they make;
- That all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to maximize their potential;
- That respect to all is critical to this process;
- That it is necessary to support, further, and exemplify diversity and multiculturalism within the disability community and the community at large; and

- That the rights of people with disabilities should be advanced and protected.

Mission Statement

The State Rehabilitation Council is a partnership of people with disabilities, advocates, and other interested persons. It is committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation, and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient, and significantly funded. The State Rehabilitation Council is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in employment.

Recruitment/Membership

Process

The Membership Committee will actively recruit new members. The Committee will solicit names of possible candidates from current members. At the February and November meeting, the committee will review members' attendance and any vacancies and make recommendations to bring the membership into compliance.

Membership

1. Membership shall be in accordance with Section 105 of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and Executive Order 110 and shall reflect a diverse range of disability groups, geographical areas, racial and ethnic groups and gender and be comprised of the following:
 - a. At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, which representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the Council;
 - b. At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 682(a) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (as added by

section 101 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997; Public Law 105-17);

- c. At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program established under section 112;
 - d. At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation program who shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if the counselor is an employee of the designated State agency;
 - e. At least one representative who is a community rehabilitation program service provider;
 - f. Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
 - g. Representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of—
 - i. individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory and mental disabilities; and
 - ii. persons who are representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;
 - h. Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
 - i. At least one representative of the state educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under Title I and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - j. At least one representative of the state workforce investment board; and
 - k. The Director of the DVRS shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.
2. A majority of Council members shall be persons with disabilities, not employed by the DVRS.
 3. The total number of voting members shall not exceed twenty-five (25).

Attendance

Participation in the general meetings, committee meetings and annual retreat is critical to facilitate the work of the Council. The

Membership Committee will review a cumulative attendance report. Members not meeting attendance requirements will be contacted by the Membership Committee regarding their availability to continue on the Council.

New Member Orientation

An orientation for new members will be provided by the Executive Committee prior to the new members' first regular council meeting.

Meetings

Schedule

Regular meetings of the Council are usually held on the second Wednesday of February, May, September, and November (Appendix B). A quorum of appointed members must be present to conduct the formal business of the Council. The annual Retreat is usually held in March.

The full Council will meet during the morning session and committees will meet during the afternoon session.

Special meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. Notification of not less than five business days shall be made to all members.

An RSVP is required by all members one week prior to the meeting date to ensure adequate accommodations.

Agenda

The Executive Committee will establish the agenda for the meetings of the Council.

Sites/Accommodations

All meeting rooms and facilities will be accessible and of adequate size. Provision will be made for special modes of communication.

Notification/Emergencies

A phone tree will be put into place in the event of inclement weather or an emergency on the morning of the meetings. The Executive Committee, having a current phone list of all members, will call their assigned individuals regarding the cancellation of a meeting.

Each SRC member is responsible for providing the Executive Committee with current phone and/or TDD, fax numbers, and mailing addresses.

Elections/Terms of Office

The Chairperson appoints a Nominating Committee for officer elections at the September meeting preceding the election year (odd year). The Nominating Committee is responsible for presenting a slate of officers for election at the following May meeting (even year).

At the May meeting of the election year, the slate recommended by the nominating committee as well as nominations made from the floor shall be considered, and an election held. A majority vote of the members present shall be required for election.

Officers/Duties

Chairperson

- Convenes and presides over the meetings of the Council
- Appoints Standing Committees yearly
- Appoints Ad Hoc Committees on an as needed basis for specific tasks
- Participates in Tri-Council meetings
- Represents SRC at meetings and activities of other councils including SILC and CBVI
- Other duties that the Council feels appropriate

Vice-Chairperson

- When the chairperson is not available, the vice-chairperson assumes these duties
- Coordinates preparation of Annual Report to RSA

Treasurer

- Prepares and submits the annual SRC budget for review and approval of Council
- Reports on status of budget at each Council meeting
- Maintains the financial accounts of the SRC
- Approves requests for expenditures and reimbursements

Committees

Each Council member is expected to participate on a committee. Each committee carries out work necessary to meet the goals of the Council.

The Chairperson shall appoint committees annually in accordance with the By-laws. There are four Standing Committees:

Executive Committee consists of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and the DVRS Director as ex officio.

Program Committee, which shall include activities such as, but not limited to, program evaluation and consumer satisfaction.

Policy and Planning Committee, which shall include activities such as, but not limited to, advocacy, policy, and state plan review.

Membership Committee, which shall include activities such as, but not limited to, an annual review of the membership of the Council and the preparation, as necessary, of a list of persons to be recommended to the Governor for appointment or re-appointment to the Council.

Ad hoc committees, task forces, and study groups shall be created at the privilege of the Council Chairperson, to evaluate Council activities; identify areas of concern for Council attention; identify

legislative issues and recommend strategies to inform the Legislature on the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities; and coordinate with other agencies and groups that share an interest in legislation, regulation, planning, and programming relating to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. At least two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the ad hoc committees, task forces, and study groups shall be members of the Council. Each ad hoc committee, task force, and study group shall elect a Chairperson who must be a Council member for the purposes of reporting to the Council.

The Chairperson shall appoint a Nominating Committee for officer elections at the September meeting preceding the election year. It shall be responsible for presenting a slate of officers for election at the following May meeting. Nominating Committee members shall be Council members and shall elect from among the members a Chairperson for purposes of reporting to the Council.

The Chairperson shall appoint a By-laws Review Committee in even numbered years to review bi-annually the By-laws, with the power to make suggestions for By-laws revisions to the full Council.

Budget

Fiscal Agent

The fiscal agent performs all business office functions of SRC including accounting and banking. The fiscal agent disburses funds as directed by the treasurer, maintains and reconciles books and records, and prepares periodic reports for SRC as required by the DVRS contract.

Expenditures

Under provisions of the DVRS contract, the fiscal agent maintains separate books and records, including a checking account specifically for SRC. Allowable expenditures are only those authorized by the treasurer within the scope of the DVRS contract budget.

Process to Reimburse Members and Nominees

1. Travel: SRC-approved members will be reimbursed for pre-approved actual costs
2. Mileage: State rate per mile
3. Lodging: State rate *
4. Per Diem Meals (In or Out-of-State): State rate *
5. Personal Assistance: Pre-approved actual cost
6. Interpreter Services: State Fee Schedule *
7. Child Care: Pre-approved actual cost
8. Equipment: Pre-approved actual cost
9. Consultants: As budgeted
10. Miscellaneous: SRC members shall submit claims for reimbursement for such items as telephone calls, copying, conversion of materials to alternative formats and other reasonable costs incurred in the performance of SRC duties within reasonable pre-approved amounts. Actual bills or official receipts shall be submitted with the Expense Report/Reimbursement Request (Appendix D).

* Contact DVRS liaison for allowable rates

Tasks

State Plan Review and Attachment

Section 4.2(b)(3) of the State plan preprint mandates that DVRS “include in the State plan and in any revision to the plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendations.” This information is contained in Attachment 4.2(c) that DVRS submits with the State plan. RSA requires that the State plan be submitted on or before April 1.

September: DVRS notifies SRC at the general meeting of its intention to update specific portions of the State Plan including the SRC attachment. The Chair assigns the

development of the attachment to the State Plan Committee in conjunction with the preparation of the annual report to RSA.

November: Comments are solicited so that attachments can be revised.

January 15: State Plan Committee meets with DVRS staff to discuss final version.

February: Vote by membership at general meeting to approve final version of attachment.

March 1: Final version of State plan with the attachments sent to Commissioner, Department of Labor for approval.

April 1: State plan with attachments submitted to RSA.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey (Timeframes need to be developed)

The law requires the SRC to conduct, to the extent feasible, a review and analysis of the effectiveness and satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services. The funding sources may be the Rehabilitation Act or other public or private funds. The services may be those provided by the state agency and other private or public programs that provide VR services to individuals with disabilities. In a broader context, the law also provides for the SRC to conduct studies of state agencies or any other public and private entities which are responsible for performing functions for individuals with disabilities.

Annual Report (Report to be prepared and disseminated for discussion at the November meeting.)

Prepare and submit an annual report covering the period 10/1 to 9/30 to the Governor or appropriate State entity and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration by December 31 on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public.

The format requested by RSA is as follows:

- administration of the SRC in terms of considerations such as membership, by-laws, committees, training, staffing, meetings and forums, and resource plan;

- major issues addressed;
- activities and accomplishments including, but not limited to, the functions identified in section 105(c) of the Act; and
- planned activities.

Resource Plan (Should be prepared and disseminated prior to September meeting for approval at September meeting.)

Section 105 (d) Resources

1. Plan. The Council shall prepare, in conjunction with the designated State unit, a plan for the provision of such resources, including such staff and other personnel, as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Council under this section. The resource plan shall, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan.

Functions of Council

Section 105 (c)

The Council shall, after consulting with the State workforce investment board,

1. review, analyze, and advise the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the DVRS, particularly responsibilities relating to—
 - a. eligibility (including order of selection);
 - b. the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
 - c. functions performed by state agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act;
2. in partnership with the DVRS—
 - a. develop, agree to, and review state goals and priorities in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(C); and
 - b. evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(E);
3. advise the DVRS regarding activities authorized to be carried out under Title I, and assist in the preparation of the State Plan

- and amendments to the Plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluation required by Title I;
4. to the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—
 - a. the functions performed by the designated State agency;
 - b. vocational rehabilitation services provided by state agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and
 - c. employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under Title I, including the availability of health and other benefits in connection with such employment outcomes;
 5. prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public;
 6. to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (as amended by section 101 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997; Public Law 105-17), the State Developmental Disabilities Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 6024), the State Mental Health Planning Council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x-4(a)), and the State workforce investment board;
 7. provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the DVRS and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State;
 8. prepare, in conjunction with the DVRS, a plan for the provision of such resources, including such staff and other personnel, as may be necessary and sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council; and

9. perform such other functions, consistent with the purpose of Title I, as the State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

Public Hearings

DVRS holds public hearing meetings for the State Plan in February
- SRC could have a different timetable. Public hearings are also held when adoption/re-adoption of the Administrative Code is due
- dates vary.

Administrative Code Review

Sets forth the policy that the agency follows when implementing both the federal and state laws. The advice and recommendations of the SRC will be sought when developing code.

DVRS as Support

The DVRS will provide support to assist the SRC with its responsibilities.

Liaison

The Director's Executive Assistant is the liaison to the SRC and will coordinate the support activities.

Clerical

The Director's Secretarial Assistant provides the clerical support for the SRC and coordinates the work of other clerical personnel when necessary to facilitate the work of the SRC. She arranges for meeting sites, refreshments, special modes of communication, and personal assistant services.

Technical

Program Planning and Development Specialists are available as technical support specialists. A specialist will be assigned as requested to assist SRC members with specific mandated tasks, i.e., Consumer Satisfaction Survey, State Plan, Rehabilitation Act, etc.

Accounting

The DVRS accounting specialist is available for advice and support for the SRC treasurer or individual members regarding budgets and reimbursements.

**Section 5:
Example of State Plan Section 4.2(c) (Virginia
Blind SRC)**

**Attachment 4.2(c)
Summary of Input and Recommendations
of the State Rehabilitation Council,
Response of the Designated State Unit,
and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) collaborate to develop the DBVI state plan and vocational rehabilitation (VR) policies and procedures. DBVI and the SRC also obtain input from individuals who are blind and vision impaired and other stakeholders through public comment, satisfaction surveys, and annual needs assessments.

During spring 2010, the SRC state plan writing team assisted DBVI in preparing the 2011 state plan. The writing team reviewed state plan drafts and provided input to ensure the plan was consistent with the SRC and VR program goals, objectives, and policies. The full SRC reviewed the state plan final draft at its June 12 quarterly meeting.

The SRC continues to recommend that DBVI remain focused on the seven goals and priorities contained in state plan attachment 4.11 (c) (1). With a few exceptions, the issues and recommendations found in the 2011 state plan attachment 4.2 (c) relate directly to the seven goals and priorities.

Informed choice is an area of concern for the SRC and other stakeholders. SRC members and individuals making public comment indicated DBVI should assure that individuals applying for and receiving services are informed and guided by DBVI staff about their rights to make informed choices regarding their vocational goals and the goods and services they are eligible to receive to accomplish those goals.

Subsequently, DBVI has provided training to staff members regarding the philosophy and practice of informed choice

and consumer choice. This will continue to be a major area of training focus during 2011.

The SRC has expressed interest in helping to facilitate public meetings during 2011. DBVI and the SRC will partner to ensure member(s) of the SRC will participate in conducting public meetings during the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011.

Accessible materials in alternative formats is a top priority of the SRC, other stakeholders, and DBVI. Subsequently, the SRC advised DBVI regarding the development of an accessibility policy which was implemented in FFY 2010. Ensuring individuals applying for and receiving services are informed of and provided with materials in alternative formats will continue to be a high priority in 2011.

Another area of interest of the SRC is participation in the National Council of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The current and previous SRC chairperson have facilitated and participated in NCSRC phone calls and meetings facilitated by the George Washington University TACE. During these meetings SRC chairpersons in the Mid-Atlantic Region have expressed interest in maintaining periodic contact with each other for the purpose of networking and sharing best practices. The DBVI SRC requests that the chairman be provided with financial sponsorship to attend NCSRC meetings that are held in conjunction with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) during 2011. DBVI will ensure that funds are budgeted to support the SRC chairman's participation in NCSRC activities.

During FFY 2007, the SRC worked with DBVI and the Mississippi State University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Blindness and Low Vision to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.

Assessment results were included in the FFY 2008 state plan submission. The SRC and DBVI continue to develop and implement strategies in response to many assessment recommendations.

The following summary of issues and recommendations addresses input DBVI received from the SRC, consumer satisfaction surveys, public comments, and the 2007 comprehensive needs assessment.

Issue 1:

Based upon the results of the consumer satisfaction surveys and the comprehensive needs assessment, the SRC requested the VR program continue to make competitive employment outcomes with high wages its highest priority. This priority should be reflected in DBVI goals and priorities, in staff training, and other activities focusing on job placement and job retention.

Response 1:

The state plan attachment 4.11(c)(1) reflects the SRC recommendation and DBVI's commitment to make job placement and retention its highest priority. Every quarter, DBVI's vocational rehabilitation director reports to the SRC the competitive employment outcome results, including average hourly wages at closure. During 2009, DBVI job placement and retention activities included:

1. DBVI's continued use of WORKWORLD, a decision support software that educates individuals with disabilities about work incentives associated with state and federal disability and poverty benefits programs;
2. Continued use of self-directed search and interest inventories to facilitate job placement and development;
3. Partnering with individuals who are seeking services to optimize employment opportunities;
4. DBVI regional office managers' and VR counselors' participation in local Workforce Investment Boards' activities throughout the Commonwealth;
5. Participating in local job networking opportunities with the Department of Rehabilitative Services; and
6. Sharing national, state, and local job opportunities identified through business networks, state and federal agencies, and The Net with individuals receiving services, consumer advocacy groups, and other interested parties.

Issue 2:

The SRC recommends DBVI continue to conduct regional public meetings with regional or state meetings of consumer organizations.

Response 2:

DBVI conducted a total of six public meetings in FFY 2010 to provide information about the development of the FFY 2011 state plan. Three meetings were conducted in conjunction with consumer advocacy groups' state or monthly meetings, two were conducted in regional offices, and one was conducted at the VRCBVI. One meeting was held in conjunction with the Department of Rehabilitative Services during the 2009 Transition Forum.

DBVI will share the public comments and agency responses for these seven meetings with the SRC and post that information on the DBVI website. An electronic copy will be provided to the SRC and general public.

DBVI will conduct at least five public meetings during 2011.

Issue 3:

The SRC requested DBVI include a 5-year baseline comparison to the report. The SRC said it would gain a better understanding of results by comparing scores from previous years.

Response 3:

Since 2007, DBVI continues to provide the SRC with a 5-year baseline comparison of satisfaction survey results.

Issue 4:

The SRC requested to be informed on projected resources for serving eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers. OOS has been an area of special interest for the SRC since the order's establishment in late FFY 2004. The SRC provided input in the development of OOS categories before DBVI instituted the OOS.

Response 4:

At least every quarter, DBVI provides the SRC with information regarding OOS categories being served, plans for opening or closing categories based on current budget trends, and numbers of individuals on the waiting list for services. Since June

2009, DBVI has been serving individuals in all categories. DBVI does not plan to close categories in FFY 2011.

Issue 5:

The SRC continued to identify transition and mentoring as needs, and requested DBVI to continue to make transition services for high school students a high priority, especially in developing the state plan. The SRC has a standing subcommittee to help develop strategies and recommendations to enhance transition services for blind high school students. Some members of the SRC also have volunteered to participate in transition/mentoring activities.

Response 5:

Student transition services remain a high priority for DBVI. During the summer of 2009, DBVI provided transition services to students participating in the Summer Transition program, the College Assessment program, and the GOAL weekend at the Virginia Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

DBVI continued the Summer Work program for students in 2009. This program enables students to acquire work experience, improve their adaptive skills, and gain experiences leading to successful vocational training and/or employment after graduation, just like their sighted peers. The Summer Work program will continue in 2010.

During FFY 2009, DBVI and the SRC planned and developed a mentoring program called “Who Wants to Be a Winner?” This year-long program was to have been conducted in the Richmond area through VRCBVI and would have included eight pairs of mentors and mentees. FFY 2009 innovative and expansion activities include the mentoring program. Funds were allocated to cover costs associated with that program’s development and implementation.

During the spring of 2009, DBVI disseminated information to DBVI regional offices and educational coordinators about a newly developed year-long mentoring program. The program received two applications for mentors, but no applications for mentees after extending deadlines for receipt of applications. Though the program has not yet been initiated due to lack of

applications, DBVI is reviewing feedback from potential mentees. That feedback reflects that individuals may be more interested in short-term, as-needed mentoring activities, rather than participating in a program that extends over a longer period of time.

DBVI will continue efforts to implement the mentoring program in FFY 2011.

Issue 6:

Federal and state monitoring and review activities continue to be an area of interest for the SRC.

Response 6:

In June 2008, DBVI submitted the 2009 state plan to RSA. RSA requested that DBVI revise five sections of the plan. Those revisions were submitted in August 2008. During the SRC's September 2008 quarterly meeting, DBVI advised the SRC of RSA's revision request and the agency's response. At the SRC's March 2009 quarterly meeting, DBVI reported on the January 2009 closing of Categories 2 and 3.

In November 2010, DBVI participated in a RSA state monitoring visit. Prior to monitoring, the SRC met with representatives of RSA at the September 2009 quarterly meeting and was provided with information about the purpose of the monitoring and RSA monitoring priorities. Additionally, the SRC chairman participated in phone calls with DBVI and RSA staff before the monitoring occurred and was present during opening and closing sessions of the actual monitoring visit. The SRC chairman also participated in an interview with the RSA state team to discuss DBVI's performance.

Issue 7:

The SRC 2008 Annual Report included information about the 2007 comprehensive needs assessments, the roles of the SRC, and some SRC accomplishments.

Response 7:

In 2009 and 2010, the SRC convened a writing team to develop their annual report. DBVI staff provided assistance in gathering data, developing drafts, and submitting the annual report

to RSA and the governor. The SRC annual report includes information about DBVI services, and updates in SRC roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments. In 2011, DBVI will continue to maintain regular contact with the SRC chair on the status of legislation, budget, order of selection, and agency progress toward achievement of standards and indicators. DBVI will maintain its working partnership with the SRC and communicate with the SRC at its quarterly meetings, and as needed during the year.

Issue 8:

The SRC requests information on earnings for individuals closed in successful work outcomes, hourly earnings broken down by work status, and the percentage of wage-earning closures working full-time.

Response 8:

Since FFY 2007, DBVI provides the SRC with VR outcomes at quarterly meetings. Using monthly reports generated through the DBVI case management system, DBVI reports hourly wages, percent of individuals working part-time and full-time, and average age of individuals whose cases were closed with a successful employment outcome.

Issue 9:

The SRC requests DBVI continue to update the council on Workforce Investment Act (WIA) activities, especially reauthorization of WIA and its Title IV (Rehabilitation Act).

Response 9:

DBVI will continue to provide the SRC with information on WIA and other legislation impacting services to blind and visually impaired citizens of the Commonwealth. This information is provided at quarterly SRC meetings, and as needed throughout the year.

Issue 10:

The SRC is interested in being kept informed regarding the standards and indicators.

Response 10:

Standards and indicators are a regular topic for discussion during the quarterly meetings. DBVI keeps the SRC informed and seeks SRC input regarding agency steps and strategies to improve standards and indicators' scores.

Issue 11:

The agency's orientation to blindness training program for new staff started in 1997 as an SRC initiative and continues to be an activity of SRC interest.

Response 11:

During FFY 2009, DBVI conducted three orientation to blindness training sessions for newly hired DBVI staff. Three individuals participated in the orientation. Each was given the option to participate using sleep shades.

A critical component of orientation is the staff's interaction with students at the center, in classes and during recreational activities after 5:00 p.m.

Issue 12:

SRC recommended DBVI continue to recruit and hire qualified individuals who are blind or vision impaired, make job position announcements available to consumer groups, and develop other strategies to recruit qualified blind individuals.

Response 12:

DBVI concurs with the SRC that recruiting and hiring qualified blind people to provide rehabilitation services should be a priority. DBVI routinely sends job announcements to Virginia consumer groups in Virginia and the local channel of Newsline. During 2009, DBVI hired a total of three blind and visually impaired individuals, one at VRCBVI and one each in the Fairfax and Norfolk regional offices.

Issue 13:

The SRC elected to accomplish much of its work by committee. Its chairperson has placed a greater emphasis on using

committees to conduct SRC business. Subsequently, several committees were established and very active during FFY 2009. Committees included transition, transportation, consumer satisfaction survey, information for new consumers, and coordination with DRS.

Response 13:

During FFY 2009, the SRC continued to use its committees to partner with DBVI. Standing committees include transition, transportation, and coordination with the SRC of the Department of Rehabilitative Services. When needed, the SRC has added committees to focus on issues or topics such as information provided to new consumers of services; state plan and annual report development; informed choice; contracted CRP services delivery; job outreach; comprehensive needs assessment; and hearing officer selection. SRC members also serve as liaisons to other councils, including Workforce/VR collaboration, the Virginia Assistive Technology System, the Department of Rehabilitative Services SRC, and the State Independent Living Council.

Issue 14:

In FFY 2008, the SRC requested the agency continue a formal orientation program for new members. The proven success of this program is reflected in the positive feedback SRC has received from new members who have participated in previous orientations.

Response 14:

In 2009, DBVI conducted a new SRC member orientation led by the SRC chairperson, VR director, and other DBVI staff. The following agenda was developed by the SRC chairperson and the DBVI VR director:

1. Welcome to and introduction of new members;
2. The DBVI mission and brief history of the agency;
3. The roles and responsibilities of the SRC;
4. An overview of the Virginia Industries for the Blind programs;
5. An overview of VRCBVI programs and tour of the facility;
6. An overview of the VR program;

7. The Randolph-Sheppard Food Management program;
8. An overview of DBVI assistive technology (AT) services and tour of the AT Lab at the DBVI headquarters;
9. An overview of DBVI regional offices; and
10. An overview of orientation and mobility, rehabilitation teaching, deaf blind services, and education services.

Issue 15:

For several years, an SRC member has been sponsored to attend the spring Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Conference in Bethesda. The chairperson requested sponsorship to attend the fall 2008 and spring 2009 CSAVR meetings.

Response 15:

DBVI sponsored the SRC chairperson to attend the fall 2008 and spring 2009 CSAVR meetings.

Issue 16:

The SRC of DBVI and the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) considered a FFY 2007 suggestion to send a representative to each other's SRC meeting. This suggestion focused on increasing collaboration on critical issues, especially legislative issues that impact individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

Response 16:

DBVI supports this initiative. During FFY 2009, the SRC of both agencies (DBVI and DRS) voted to select a member to attend the other agency's SRC meeting as a nonvoting member.

Funds are allocated to sponsor associated travel expenses for the DBVI SRC liaison attending a DRS SRC meeting.

Issue 17:

Responses requested by the SRC to the comprehensive needs assessment recommendations are included on the SRC quarterly agenda for review and discussion.

Response 17:

The 13 recommendations from the comprehensive needs assessment final report were forwarded to the SRC for review prior to its March 2008 meeting. DBVI and the SRC continued to identify and implement action items and strategies to address these recommendations during FFY 2008, 2009, and 2010. Every quarter, DBVI reports to the SRC on the progress of tasks associated with the recommendations.

The following reflect responses or actions to the 13 recommendations:

- DBVI will develop a mentoring program. During FFY 2009, a workgroup composed of SRC members and DBVI staff developed a mentoring program scheduled to start the summer of 2010. During the spring of 2009, DBVI disseminated information to DBVI regional offices and educational coordinators about a newly developed year-long mentoring program. The program received two applications for mentors but no applications for mentees after extending deadlines for receipt of applications. Though the program has not yet been initiated due to lack of applications, DBVI is reviewing feedback from potential mentees. That feedback reflects individuals may be more interested in short-term, as-needed mentoring activities, rather than participating in a program that extends over a longer period of time.
- DBVI will encourage consumers and VR counselors to take full advantage of computer labs, interest inventories, job fairs, job clubs in localities, and one-stop centers. To meet this goal, DBVI will include VR counselors and regional managers in developing strategies.
- DBVI will train VR staff on functional aspects of various visual impairments and add an appendix to the DBVI VR policy manual addressing VR implications of eye conditions. DBVI provided training during the fall 2008 VR staff meeting, and included within the VR policy manual an appendix entitled “Eye Diseases or Disorders.” During FY 2010, DBVI will develop an appendix discussing VR implications of eye conditions.

- DBVI policy already provides job coach access to consumers requiring substantial support in performing job functions.
- DBVI currently provides information regarding self-employment to individuals who have the interest, aptitude, and ability to function in a self-employment capacity.
- In the area of transition services to students, DBVI will ensure all transition-aged students and their parents receive information on summer work programs and summer transition program opportunities conducted at VRCBVI.
- DBVI will be unable at this time to pursue the establishment of new job placement specialist positions due to significant budgetary constraints.
- DBVI is ensuring individuals with IPEs are provided with assistive technology information and services potentially necessary for them to obtain or maintain employment. DBVI will work with the SRC to consider adding an assistive technology section to the consumer satisfaction survey provided to individuals when their VR cases are closed. DBVI will include regional managers and VR counselors in the development of strategies to meet this goal.
- DBVI will collaborate with GWU or other consultants to provide “back-to-basics” training to VR counselors. Associated training costs will be covered by the VR In-Service Training Grant.
- In the area of transition, which is always an area of need for blind or visually impaired individuals, DBVI is unable to independently meet all the transportation needs. Before a consumer’s VR case is closed, VR counselors will help the individual learn to travel independently and locate reliable transportation to and from work.
- In Henrico County, where the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) is located, public transportation is sorely lacking. In recent years, SRC transition committee members and DBVI partnered to ensure the Greater Richmond Transit Authority bus service would continue to maintain a stop at VRCBVI. The VRCBVI bus stop remains despite state and

local budget cuts. The VR director serves on the Virginia Interagency Transportation Council that addresses transportation to rural-based individuals with disabilities.

- DBVI has developed a marketing committee to increase outreach and service recognition to all Virginia citizens, with a specific emphasis on rural populations. Due to significant budget shortfalls in FFY 2008 and 2009, the DBVI marketing committee has been unable to accomplish these goals. However, DBVI is partnering with the Department of Rehabilitative Services at the state and local level to ensure Virginians are aware of potential services available in their home communities.
- During FFY 2009, the SRC appointed two members to serve on a workgroup with DBVI staff to review current DBVI accessibility policies and practices. The workgroup drafted an accessibility policy unanimously supported by the SRC. During 2010, DBVI has implemented accessibility policies that build upon the workgroup's recommendations.

Section 6: Example of Notebook for RSA Monitoring Visit (West Virginia)

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council created a notebook with index and dividers for easy access to the council's data. This was given to the team as the executive committee entered the meeting room. The book included:

1. Letter by executive director or chair welcoming and thanking RSA for meeting with council representatives
2. Roster/terms (provided pictures of executive committee members who were meeting with the RSA team so they would recognize the member when talking)
3. Mission/vision
4. Purpose
5. Meeting schedule
6. Accomplishments, goals, objectives
7. Bylaws
8. Policies
9. Committees/committee structure
10. Council minutes for the past year
11. Executive director reports for the past year
12. Annual agreement with DRS
13. Financial reports for the past year (included last compilation report)
14. Consumer satisfaction survey data: copy of survey, copy of cover letter sent with survey, last annual consumer satisfaction survey report
15. SRC annual report (included last 3 years)
16. Incorporation papers
17. NCSRC proclamation/history
18. Letter to DRS with state plan recommendations/copy of DRS reply
19. Corrective action involving the past 3 years' state plan

Other suggestions or additions:

Pictures of displays when participating at events
Pictures of council members participating in activities

**Section 7:
Example Worksheet: Membership Composition
Mandates**

Annual SRC Rollover Date: _____

Mandated Positions (As cited in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)	Name & Residence	Voting Member	Ex Officio	Disability Y/N	Term Started	Term End
At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705, whose representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the council						
At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to Section 682(a) of the Individuals with						

Mandated Positions (As cited in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)	Name & Residence	Voting Member	Ex Officio	Disability Y/N	Term Started	Term End
Disabilities Education Act						
At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program established under Section 112						
At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the council if the counselor is an employee of the designated state agency						
At least one representative of community rehabilitation program						

Mandated Positions (As cited in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)	Name & Residence	Voting Member	Ex Officio	Disability Y/N	Term Started	Term End
service providers						
Four representatives of business, industry, and labor (to include at least one representative of the State Workforce Investment board)						
Representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross-section of (1) individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities and (2) individuals' representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or						

Mandated Positions (As cited in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)	Name & Residence	Voting Member	Ex Officio	Disability Y/N	Term Started	Term End
are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves						
Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services						
In a state in which one or more projects are carried out under Section 121, at least one representative of the directors of the projects						

Mandated Positions (As cited in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended)	Name & Residence	Voting Member	Ex Officio	Disability Y/N	Term Started	Term End
At least one representative of the state educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this title and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act						
Director of designated state unit						
TOTAL:						

**Section 8:
Example Worksheet: Report Card on Section
361.16
(h) Functions and (i) Resources**

Item	Have we done this in the last 12 months?	How?
h1: The SRC is to provide oversight of the entire agency system in such a manner that affords the council opportunity to provide advice to the agency on challenges and successes as they directly relate to the individuals served.		
h2: The SRC must be involved with the creation of the agency goals and priorities as they relate to their service delivery system.		
h3: The SRC must be involved in the state plan as required by the state unit under the Act. This includes authoring Section 4.2 of the state plan and assuring that the council has a mechanism to garner input from the public with regard to the needs of Michigan citizens with disabilities.		
h4: The SRC must conduct		

Item	Have we done this in the last 12 months?	How?
a review of consumer satisfaction with regard to the agency’s service delivery system. An analysis should be made of the findings.		
h5: The SRC must author an annual report which summarizes the past fiscal year activities of the agency and council. The report must be submitted to RSA and the governor within 30 days of the end of the calendar year.		
h6: The SRC must assure that they have established partnerships with statewide partner organizations, such as the SILC, the Developmental Disabilities Council, Advisory Council on Mental Illness, the Workforce Board, etc.		
h7: The SRC must enhance the relationships between the IL/CIL network in our state with the agency.		
h8: A new twist on “all other duties as assigned”: the council has the opportunity to determine other areas of interest, within keeping of the Act.		
i1: The council must create		

Item	Have we done this in the last 12 months?	How?
an annual resource plan to negotiate with the agency.		
i4: The council is expected to supervise and evaluate their staff.		
i5: The agency staff involved with the council must not be council employees, to avoid a conflict of interest.		

Appendix F: Previous IRI Publications

Institute on Rehabilitation Services (IRS)

First IRS (1963)

1. Case Recording
2. Medical Consultation
3. Motivation

Second IRS (1964)

1. Medical Consultation
2. Motivation

Third IRS (1965)

1. Caseload Management
2. Evaluation of Vocational Potential
3. Training Aids and Materials

Fourth IRS (1966)

1. Training Methods
2. Evaluation Units

Fifth IRS (1967)

1. Public Information
2. Public Offender

Sixth IRS (1968)

1. Alcoholic
2. Support Personnel
3. Cooperative Programs in VR

Seventh IRS (1969)

1. Behavioral Disorders
2. Closure for Cases

3. SSDI Beneficiaries

Eighth IRS (1970)

1. Disabled Disadvantages Rural
2. First-line Supervision
3. Staff Development

Ninth IRS (1971)

1. Drug Abuse
2. Placement and Follow-up
3. Expediting Services

Tenth IRS (1972)

1. Public Assistance Client
2. Program Evaluation
3. Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment

Eleventh IRS (1973)

1. Severely Disabled
2. Deaf
3. Blind

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) Publications

*Abbreviations indicate the sponsoring university: AR, University of Arkansas; Stout, University of Wisconsin–Stout; WV, University of West Virginia; GW, George Washington University.

First IRI (1974)

1. Severely Handicapped
2. Measurement of Outcomes
3. Assessment of Rehabilitation Counselor Performance

Second IRI (1975)

1. Placement of Severely Handicapped
2. Consumer Involvement
3. Severe Delivery System

Third IRI (1976)

1. Post-Employment Service

2. Affirmative Action
3. Legal Concerns for the Rehabilitation Counselor

Fourth IRI (1977)

1. Homebound Employment – AR
2. Rehabilitation Facilities – Stout
3. Utilization of Material of the IRI – WV

Fifth IRI (1978)

1. Independent Living – AR
2. Similar Benefits – Stout
3. Rehabilitation of Person with Emotional Disorders – WV

Sixth IRI (1979)

1. Adjustment Services in Vocational Rehabilitation – AR
2. Rehabilitation Engineering: A Counselor's Guide – Stout
3. Techniques for Working in the Community – WV

Seventh IRI (1980)

1. Independent Living – Part B – AR
2. Interpreter Services – Stout
3. Rehabilitation Counseling – WV

Eighth IRI (1981)

1. Use of Technology in the Delivery of Rehabilitation – WV
2. Utilization of Peer Helpers as a Rehabilitation Resource
3. Delivery of Rehabilitation Services to Inner City Nonwhite – Stout

Ninth IRI (1982)

1. Rehabilitation of the Learning-Disabled Client – WV
2. Marketing: An Approach to Placement – Stout
3. Marketing: A Strategy to Promote the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Individuals – AR

Tenth IRI (1983)

1. Projects with Industry and Rehabilitation – WV
2. Private/Public Rehabilitation

Eleventh IRI (1984)

1. Rehabilitation of the Deaf-Blind Individual – AR
2. Continuum of Services: School to Work – Stout
3. Looking into Placement Systems – WV

Twelfth IRI (1985)

1. Supported Employment – AR
2. Rehabilitation of Head-Injured Clients – Stout
3. Rehabilitation and Future – WV

Thirteenth IRI (1986)

1. Multidisciplinary Approach – AR
2. Rehabilitation Technology – Stout
3. Substantial Services – WV

Fourteenth IRI (1987)

1. VR Counselor and Rehabilitation Today – WV
2. Use of Vocational Evaluation in VR – Stout
3. Future Work Place: Implications for Rehabilitation – AR

Fifteenth IRI (1988)

1. Client Involvement in VR – Stout
2. Rehabilitation of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities/Technology for Individuals with Chronic Mental Illness – AR
3. Fundamentals of Eligibility for VR Services – AR

Sixteenth IRI (1989)

1. VR Services to Persons with HIV Infection – Stout
2. The Provision of TA for Rehabilitation – Stout
3. Disability Management

Seventeenth IRI (1990)

1. Aging in America – Stout
2. Assistive Technology – AR
3. VR Services in IL Centers – AR

Eighteenth IRI (1991)

1. Substance Abuse as a Secondary Disability – Stout

2. New and Innovative Employment Services Strategies in VR – AR
3. Human Resources Development (HRD) in Rehabilitation – Stout

Nineteenth IRI (1992)

1. Consumer Involvement in Rehabilitation Research and Practice – AR
2. Serving the Underserved: Principles, Practices and Techniques – Stout
3. Multi-cultural Diversity in Rehabilitation – AR

Twentieth IRI (1993)

1. Employment Outcomes for Persons with Acquired Brain Injury – Stout
2. Counseling and Guidance in the Rehabilitation Partnership – Stout
3. Placement 2000 – AR

Twenty-First IRI (1994)

1. Native-American Rehabilitation Programs: Unmet Needs – AR
2. Operationalizing Consumer Decision-Making and Choices in the VR Process – Stout
3. Strategies for Enhancing Job Retention and Career Advancement – AR

Twenty-Second IRI (1995)

1. Shaping State Rehabilitation Programs Through Consumer Partnerships: Issues and Strategies – Stout

Twenty-Third IRI (1996)

1. Strategies for Eliminating Barriers to Effective Service Delivery – AR
2. Developing Effective Partnerships with Employers as an Effective Service Delivery Mechanism – Stout

Twenty-Fourth IRI (1997)

1. Field Service Managers and Supervisors: Strategic Leaders in Achieving Employment Outcomes – GW

2. Achieving Successful Employment Outcomes with the Use of Technology – Stout
3. Developing Self-Employment and Small Business Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities – AR

Twenty-Fifth IRI (1998)

1. Improving Employment Outcomes Through VR Counselors Who Meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Requirements – AR
2. Improving Rehabilitation Services and Employment Outcomes for Individuals Who are Deaf and Low Functioning – GW
3. Meeting Future Workforce Needs – Stout

Twenty-Sixth IRI (1999)

1. Using the Internet as a Resource to the Work of the VR Counselor – GW
2. The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of a Successful Employment Outcome – AR
3. Effective Strategies to Improve the Achievement of Employment for Individuals Who Are SSI/SSDI Participants – Stout

Twenty-Seventh IRI (2000)

1. Succession Planning in a Customer-Focused VR Environment – Stout
2. Effective Strategies for Improving Employment Outcomes for Persons with Kidney Failure – AR
3. Providing VR Services in a Workforce Environment – GW

Twenty-Eighth IRI (2001)

1. Distance Education: Opportunities and Issues for the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program – GW
2. Investing in the Transition of Youth with Disabilities to Productive Careers – AR
3. Welfare to Work for Individuals with Disabilities – Stout

Twenty-Ninth IRI (2002)

1. Teaching Orientation and Mobility Professionals – GWU

2. Promoting Consumer Empowerment Through Professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling – AR

Thirtieth IRI (2003)

1. Innovative Methods for Providing VR Services to Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities – GWU
2. A New Paradigm for Vocational Evaluation: Empowering the VR Consumer Through Vocational Information – AR

Thirty-First IRI (2004)

1. Leading and Managing Change in Public Vocational Rehabilitation – AR
2. Consumer Organizations: Important Resources for Vocational Rehabilitation – GWU

Thirty-Second IRI (2005)

1. The VR-Business Partnership – AR
2. Rehabilitation of Individuals with Autism-Spectrum Disorders – GWU

Thirty-Third IRI (2006)

1. Improving Employment Outcomes Through Evidenced-Based Practices in Vocational Rehabilitation – AR
2. Recruitment and Retention of Rehabilitation Counselors – GWU

Thirty-Fourth IRI (2007)

1. When Johnnie (or Jeannie) Comes Marching Home...and Back to Work: Linking Veterans Affairs and State Vocational Rehabilitation for Service Men and Women – GW
2. The Aging Workforce – AR

Thirty-Fifth IRI (2008)

1. Vocational Rehabilitation and Corrections: Achieving Successful Employment Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities and Criminal History – GW
2. E-Learning and Vocational Rehabilitation – AR

