

VR Portion of WIOA State Plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)

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

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

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). SRC members through their area consumer advisory councils, SRC subcommittees, task forces, quarterly meetings, and the annual consumer conference, have conducted surveys and needs assessments that have provided input to more effectively address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Again this year, funds were deemed sufficient, for MRC to select all eligible individuals to receive vocational rehabilitation services regardless of priority category. Last year the SRC was consulted and supported the MRC in the decision to open all priority categories for services. In the event that future funding proves insufficient, the MRC in partnership with the SRC will re—evaluate the need to establish an order of selection in order to prioritize eligible individuals to receive services based on the severity of their functional limitations.

The SRC, through the SRC State Plan sub—committee, has made the following recommendations to the Commission: 1. Continue to provide soft skill training to consumers; 2. Review the definition of an individual with the most significant disability and the order of selection for services; 3. Improve communication to consumers and potential consumers 4. Promote on—the—job training, increased employer engagement and industry based trainings to expand the placement of consumers into previously untapped industries including opportunities in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields 5. Partner with community colleges and appropriate employers for consumer training in such fields as certified

nursing assistant, medical assistant and pharmacy technician 6. Train counselors to provide information to consumers interested in artistic careers about freelancing, self— employment and employer based paths. 7. Establish an apprenticeship program for artists 8. Create a “State as a Model Employer (SAME)” task force to ensure state jobs are being directly marketed to people with disabilities

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

1. Continue to provide soft skill training to consumers: Soft skills training for VR staff has been completed by MRC Training Department. In addition, all area offices offer training in soft skills to all consumers, including transition aged individuals through job clubs and stand— alone programs open for all disability groups. Training is delivered using PowerPoint and includes opportunities to role play. Soft—skills training has been offered at the 2014 Consumer Conference as a stand—alone workshop and with a resume workshop at the 2015 Consumer Conference. Soft skill trainings have been offered in high schools to assist in the transition process from school to work. Currently MRC has a RFR for soft skill training specifically for transitioning high school students as part of WIOA pre—employment services. The MRC Training Department is developing an e—Learning on soft skills with a private sector company that is close to completion to provide an easily accessible resource to VR counselors and Job Placement Staff. The e—learning will offer consistency of content and provide an available resource for offices to work individually or in groups with consumers in area offices. Once this training has been completed, access to the E—Learning will be available on the Commonwealth's Learning Management System, PACE. Soft skills will be added to the list of EOHHS mandatory training for all new counselors with an expectation that all training will be completed within 90 days. All other counselors will be required to complete the e—learning within one year. Staff will also have access for a refresher or as a reference as needed. Soft skills training materials (Power Point and other resources) for staff are on My MRC (MRC's intranet) under the section titles training unit.

2. Review the definition of an individual with the most significant disability and the order of selection for services: At this time, the order of selection is not an issue as MRC has not been operating under an order of selection since 2013 allowing services to all eligible consumers regardless of priority classification. With the passage of WIOA, MRC is required to expend 15% of its Title 1 budget on pre— employment services to students with disabilities aged 16 to 22. This change may necessitate a future re— assessment of the order of selection process and the definition of an individual with a most significant disability. In the event that funding becomes insufficient to select all eligible consumers an order of selection will operate to ensure that individual duals with the most significant disabilities will be selected for VR services first.

3. Improve communication to consumers and potential consumers: The MRC welcomes the SRC input into helping to enhance communication by reminding consumers that the vocational rehabilitation process is a working partnership that needs continued consumer and counselor contact to be successful. The new consumer orientation video assists in clarifying communication between consumers and counselors and clarifies expectations. MRC is continually working to enhance electronic communication, which has been identified through the Needs Assessment as an often—preferred mode of communication for many consumers. Ongoing MRC efforts to obtain email addresses for VR consumers has led to an increase in those

addresses over the past several years, 1,500 new email addresses in the past year alone, a 8. 5% increase over the past year in the proportion of consumers in MRCIS with an email address in the system. As the job search process becomes more electronic it becomes more important for consumers to have the tools to communicate with employers and apply for jobs on line. Many VR Counselors have been working with their consumers in assisting them to get free Gmail or Hotmail accounts. MRC has also implemented a system enhancement to allow direct emailing of correspondence to consumers through the MRCIS system as well as the ability to text message that will make the process both faster and easier for consumers and counselors alike. The MRC's Commissioner's Office has been using social media like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter for the past few years, and blogs through the EOHHS site. MRC is open to exploring any additional social media as it becomes available to communicate with consumers and employers. MRC has videoconferencing available at a few sites across the state and plans to extend that capacity as much as possible within the next several years for training, conferences and public hearings.

4. Promote on—the— job training, increased employer engagement and industry based trainings to expand the placement of consumers into previously untapped industries including opportunities in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields: The MRC through its Job Placement and Employment Service Specialists cultivates business and employer relationships and peer partnerships which reflect the intent of the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2015 which calls for increased partnership and collaboration between public VR agencies and potential employers of VR consumers. MRC JPS/ESS staff use targeted workforce strategies through consumer assessments and training, targeted labor market information, and direct outreach to employers. This public—private partnership between MRC and employers creates private—industry job training opportunities for individuals with disabilities in high—growth industries, such as health care, transportation, manufacturing and customer services. MRC has developed a job driven training program to train and employ consumers as Pharmacy Technicians with CVS Health. The program started June 1, 2014. As of November 2015, there have been 45 hires through the program.

Other job—driven trainings have been developed with Advance Auto Parts for Sales and Driver positions; Enterprise for Service Agent, Driver, and Lot Attendant, The Home Depot, Lowes, G4S Security Solutions, and Allied Barton Security Services. MRC has developed a project with Manpower Training and Development Center to secure occupational web—based training, skills development and job matching for consumers in ten areas including: Microsoft Office Suite (2007. 2010) Microsoft Word, Excel and Power; Customer Service; Call Center, Administrative Assistant and Receptionist, Office and Clerical support, Packing and Product Preparation, Shipping and Receiving, Materials Inspection, Preparation for Employment, and Equipment Assembly. A total of 142 customers have been referred to date with 54 consumers referred in 2015. MRC has also purchased a software program called RESU Mate, a competitive tool utilized in the staffing and recruiting industries, to assist employment staff in basic job matching between available employment opportunities and consumer resumes and skills. All placement staff within the agency utilize the program. Use of the MRC's on—the—job training strategy has increased significantly. Many consumers who participate in an OJT obtain employment with the OJT employer and others are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT through which they gained a recent work experience. There were 190 OJTs in 2014, in 2015, 198 consumers participated in On—the—job training opportunities.

Another tool MRC uses to increase employer engagement is its annual Statewide Hiring Event. MRC has conducted these hiring events since 2013 in partnership with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program, to assist MRC consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. Over 250 consumers have been hired through these events to date.

5. Partner with community colleges and appropriate employers for consumer training in such fields as certified nursing assistant, medical assistant and pharmacy technician: It is MRC's practice to assist its consumers in accessing post—secondary educational opportunities through Community Colleges and other institutions. MRC continues to engage with employers for on—the—job trainings, job—driven trainings, and other training opportunities for its consumers. MRC closely works with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Community Colleges are represented on these boards.

MRC continues to enhance its electronic case management system (MRCIS) to capture post—secondary educational outcomes by consumers including attendance at community colleges, outcomes and degrees and certifications received. This is also tied into the WIOA performance measure for credential attainment.

6. Train counselors to provide information to consumers interested in artistic careers about freelancing, self— employment and employer based paths: It is the practice of the VR division to assist all consumers in making informed career choices in their field of interest and assist them in obtaining their goals, including those who are interested in artistic careers.

7. Establish an apprenticeship program for artists: Many apprenticeship programs exist for artists across the Commonwealth. MRC supports the expansion of on the job and apprenticeship programs in many fields. Two grant programs are offered by the Mass Cultural Council for traditional artists; Artist Fellowships Program and the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program. This second program provides a financial incentive for master artists to identify promising apprentices to whom they might pass on their traditional Skills. Review criteria include artistic excellence, the master's standing within the traditional community significance of the art form, quality of budget and work plan, and demonstrated commitment to the traditional art form. Another option in the Greater Boston area is Gateway Arts, a MRC provider who provides individualized, arts—based services to adults with disabilities that will enable them to create meaningful lives and careers in art. Gateway artists receive opportunities for local, national, and international recognition and sales. In addition, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art's Assets for Artists program provides Financial support and professional development for artists. Artists selected to participate in the North Adams Project will receive artist—focused training and match money for investments in their creative enterprises. Artists currently living in North Adams or are willing to relocate to North Adams are eligible to apply.

8. Create a “State as a Model Employer (SAME)” task force to ensure state jobs are being directly marketed to people with disabilities: The State as a model employer program was a statewide initiative to hire more individuals with disabilities into state positions. MRC supports working with consumers to find appropriate employment in State government including MRC as well as in the private sector. A total of 72 consumers were hired by the state as a whole in 2015, while MRC directly hired 9 consumers. Many other individuals with disabilities have been hired and will be hired for Commonwealth positions. MRC has in the past and continues to offer

internship programs to individuals with disabilities some of whom have obtained jobs at MRC post internship.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reviewed and responded to all recommendations provided by the Statewide Rehabilitation Council. MRC deferred on re-assessing the OOS category definitions. The MRC does not agree with the SRC that OOS needs to be reviewed at this time but will be re-evaluate in the future. MRC currently has sufficient funding to serve all consumers but in the event that there is insufficient funding, OOS categories will be reviewed and an OOS will be implemented as required.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

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

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

Not Applicable — MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

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

Not Applicable — MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

3. All State plan requirements will apply

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

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

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

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission considers cooperation and collaboration with other agencies particularly human service agencies, to be essential and beneficial to most effectively serving people with disabilities and to providing the optimum opportunity for employment. Other agencies provide critical supports, necessary resources, and dedicated human service professionals all of which augment and enhance the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. For many years, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked closely and corporately with the staff of other agencies in serving mutual consumers. Collaboration often

extends well beyond services to particular individuals. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other agencies to:

- Affect system change
- Increase resources, funding and service options
- Improve communication and mutual understanding among staff
- Change public attitude toward issues of disability
- Achieve common goals on behalf of those whom the agencies serve

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in working with other agencies, takes a predictable approach to collaboration and puts forth an agenda that is common to all interagency relationships. First, linkages, agreements or understandings are established at state, regional and local levels. Typically, the state level, with input from regional and local personnel, develops a blueprint for collaboration and an action plan. The regional level oversees the implementation of the action plan. At the local level, the actions are activated and implemented. Comprehensive inter—agency cooperation requires the full commitment and participation of all three organizational levels. Inter—agency cooperation in which the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission participates typically encompasses all of the following collaboration measures:

- Planning: There is a statewide planning structure that establishes an action plan incorporating diverse needs and perspectives. This process results in a cooperative agreement, a memorandum of understanding, or some type of action plan to which two or more agencies are committed.
- Information Exchange: A commitment is made to exchange information about resources, funding, policy and other matters necessary to mutual understanding of mission, goals, capacity, eligibility and the like.
- Identification of Liaisons: Generally, both parties identify contact persons for the purpose of communication and referral and responsible persons for issues and problem resolution.
- Cross—Training: All agency cooperation acknowledges the need for and addresses cross—training of personnel. This is not only critical to mutual understanding, but also is essential in effective, reciprocal utilization of services and appropriate referral.

Collaboration on Resources: Effective cooperation between agencies acknowledges that more can be done with less when resources are most effectively combined and when duplication is avoided whenever possible. Sharing or resources is much more than splitting the cost. It encompasses which agency does what for whom, when, where and how. Some of the rudiments for resource collaboration are set forth in written agreements and planning documents. Much of this collaboration, however, can only happen at the service level through honest and regular communication. Cooperation in which the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission engages strives to set the environment conducive to the frankness, openness, and, whenever possible flexibility necessary for collaboration on sharing of resources. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has, with several agencies and organizations, written agreements, memoranda of understanding, written work plans and/or verbal commitments on which both parties have acted. Agencies with which such collaboration has occurred and has remained active locally and at the Statewide level include, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Social Security Administration, Medicaid/Mass Health, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. The MRC VR program and MRC area office have excellent relationships with these programs operated by the agency. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low—interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology.

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

There are no programs in Massachusetts carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission further collaborates with organizations that provide services, in whole or in part, to specific constituencies, including out of school youth. Among such organizations are the Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arthritis Foundation, the Massachusetts Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Massachusetts Easter Seals, United Cerebral Palsy, the Massachusetts Head Injury Association, and the Epilepsy Association. These collaborations take the form of cooperative agreements and, sometimes, service contracts. The purpose, goals, and actions established in these agreements and contracts are very similar to the agendas set forth in interagency collaboration.

5. State use contracting programs.

The Commonwealth operates a Supplier Diversity Program including the following categories: Minority (MBE), Women (WBE), Service—Disabled Veteran (SDVOBE), Veteran (VBE), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTBE); and Disability—Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE). MRC participates in this program as part of statewide contracting as an equal opportunity initiative

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission(MRC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education(DESE) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish interagency cooperation between public education and public vocational rehabilitation agency

regarding vocational rehabilitation services pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to provide individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post—school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living and community participation.

Prior to the VR application, ESE will provide staffing resources and space at schools. MRC counselors are assigned to high schools and provide information about the agency, pre-employment transition services such as job exploration, work readiness, mentoring, and other pre-employment services in group settings to high school students with disabilities. MRC VR counselors are funded with VR resources to provide pre-employment group transition services prior to application. If students are found ineligible, MRC will collaborate with partners such as Education, Career Centers, DMH, DTA, and DDS to ensure appropriate referrals. In the event students are found ineligible, they can participate in MRC sponsored group activities such as career exploration events in collaboration with the schools. MRC is currently not under OOS and does not utilize a waitlist, however if a waitlist is established in the future, students can participate in group pre-employment and informational/referral activities sponsored by MRC.

MRC is mandated within WIOA to serve individuals with disabilities in high school aged 16 to 22. MRC services begin at the high school level and extend through post—secondary activities with the ultimate outcome being employment. MRC is working closely with local school districts on transition and WIOA Pre—Employment Transition Services. MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth and has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. MRC also provides supported employment services to youth through its local offices.

The MOU has been signed by DESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester and MRC Commissioner Adelaide Osborne and is in effect as of November 1, 2015. The MOU will be revised as needed.

The purpose of this memorandum is to establish interagency cooperation between the public education and the public vocational rehabilitation systems so that students with disabilities have access to transition planning and services. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) are mutually committed to promoting individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post—school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, post-secondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

The ESE is responsible for overseeing school district compliance with the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Commonwealth's special education law, G.L. Chapter 71B. The MRC provides comprehensive services to individuals with disabilities to improve their quality of life and economic self—sufficiency in the community. The MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program is authorized and funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014, P.L. 113—128 ("WIOA"). The MRC assists individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program helps individuals with physical, psychiatric, and/or learning disabilities with the challenges of the modern workplace. WIOA promotes coordination of services in order to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities. Students transition from receiving educational and related services from school personnel, and pre—employment

transition services (PETS) from the MRC, to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services provided through the MRC, the designated state agency.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA nothing in this memorandum will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities.

In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this memorandum relieves the MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the MRC's eligibility criteria.

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

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

The MOU outlines ongoing communication and collaboration between the ESE and the MRC at the state and local level. Designated staff from the ESE and the MRC at the state level will communicate on an ongoing basis, at least annually, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to transition.

The following initiatives will foster local collaboration between the MRC's staff and LEAs:

Training and Guidance: ESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate on transition training activities for students, families, educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other involved staff, where needed and appropriate. ESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate, as needed and appropriate, to produce joint guidance on WIOA, and local collaboration.

Collaborative Work: The ESE will support and encourage LEAs to provide MRC staff with resources necessary to the MRC's work, such as access to meeting space, work space, telephones, and Wi—Fi or wired connection to the Internet. The ESE will support and encourage LEAs to provide information to the MRC's staff, or assist in obtaining information needed, from students with 504 plans or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and their families/legal guardians. This will facilitate provision of PETS to students who need them, and timely eligibility determination and documentation of vocational rehabilitation activities in the MRC case management system. As appropriate and consistent with applicable student records laws, this information could include student and family/legal guardian contact and personal information, student assessment data, IEPs, 504 plans, and Transition Planning Forms. The ESE will support and encourage LEAs to collaborate with the MRC to provide career development activities on local and regional levels, as appropriate. These activities could include career fairs, job shadowing, career exploration activities, family resource information sessions, internships, job support and coaching, and job driven trainings/work—based training in collaboration with Career Centers and other organizations. The MRC will designate staff in Area Offices to work cooperatively with LEAs to coordinate PETS and transition planning and services, and to

disseminate information to parents/legal guardians and students about the MRC transition process as early as the student's 16th birthday.

The MRC will provide consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conference and conference calls), to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post—school activities. If a student is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, this consultation and technical assistance should result in the MRC's development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting and effective implementation of the IPE post graduation or when the student turns 22 years of age, whichever comes first. This consultation and technical assistance might include but is not limited to informational sessions with students, families/legal guardians, and school personnel regarding MRC services, including referral and eligibility information; and assigning a counselor point—of—contact for each high school to provide information, receive referrals, and develop IPEs with students. The ESE and the MRC will consider the provision of joint grant opportunities for purposes such as promoting collaboration between schools, the MRC, and community entities; the development of integrated school—to—post—school systems; and the promotion and statewide dissemination of best practices.

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

The MOU covers compliance with state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to transition planning at the local level:

The ESE will provide ongoing guidance to LEAs regarding the responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE") to students eligible for special education and Section 504 accommodation plans, as mandated by federal and state law. Guidance will include the requirements that IEPs specify needed transition services; that special education transition services be provided for each eligible student beginning at age 14; that representatives of participating agencies be invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent/legal guardian or student who has reached the age of majority; and that IEP Teams discuss the transfer of parental rights to the student at least one year before the student turns 18. The ESE will also provide guidance to LEAs to facilitate Chapter 688 referrals to the appropriate agency for eligible students who will require ongoing supports and services from the adult service system.

On a regular basis, the ESE will monitor LEAs' development and use of policies and procedures, including those regarding Section 504 and the transition requirements of IDEA. All monitoring reports will be made publicly available on the ESE's web site. The ESE will provide guidance to LEAs, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, to inform LEAs that WOIA prohibits LEAs from entering into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment. The ESE assures that it will not enter such a contract or other arrangement.

The MRC will ensure that its Area Offices will determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities and will provide PETS based on individual need. For those

students eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the rehabilitation counselor, together with the student, will develop an IPE stating the vocational goal and the services necessary to achieve it. These services may include: vocational guidance, work evaluation, skills training at a college or community rehabilitation program, adaptive equipment, and benefits counseling. Required PETS activities are: job exploration counseling; work—based learning experiences; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education; workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and instruction in self—advocacy. The ESE and the MRC will provide guidance for local MRC staff and school district personnel on transition planning for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of IEPs under section 614(d) of the IDEA. MRC develops IPEs for students with disabilities as soon as possible.

MRC and DESE will review and revise forms, procedures, and provide technical assistance to local school districts regarding transition planning in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

The ESE will review the effectiveness of the IEP format which integrates transition planning into the form as a whole and will consider revisions as necessary or appropriate. The ESE will also consider revisions that might be necessary as a result of any changes in federal or state law. The ESE will invite MRC representatives to comment on any proposed changes that affect transition planning

The ESE and the MRC will coordinate, as necessary, to satisfy documentation requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 397 with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum—wage employment.

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

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) are mutually committed to promoting individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post—school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

MRC and DESE understand their financial responsibilities under IDEA and WIOA and will work collaboratively to address any concerns that may arise in our workgroup. In addition, MRC has and will continue to develop strong working relationships between MRC Area Offices and LEAs which assists in facilitating open communication and resolution of issues. MRC collaborates with LEAs on shared consumer cases to ensure individuals receive quality services.

MRC will contribute 15% of its financial resources towards providing pre-employment transition services to high school students ages 16-22 with disabilities. Additionally, MRC will provide an array of pre-employment transition services. The high schools will provide in-kind contributions of staff time, space, and transition services/resources. MRC will continue to work closely with ESE to ensure adequate financial resources are available in the schools for high school students.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this memorandum will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)

of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this memorandum relieves the MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the MRC's eligibility criteria.

Designated staff from the ESE and the MRC at the state level will communicate on an ongoing basis, at least annually, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to transition. ESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate on transition training activities for students, families, educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other involved staff, where needed and appropriate. ESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate, as needed and appropriate, to produce joint guidance on WIOA, and local collaboration.

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

The MRC Area Offices will provide outreach to high schools to assist in informing students with disabilities aged 16 to 22 who are receiving IDEA services or who are individuals with disabilities for the purposes of Section 504 of the availability of MRC's services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible in the transition process and at least two years prior to graduation or the student's 22nd birthday. MRC outreach information includes a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, the eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

MRC is providing pre—employment transition services to individuals with disabilities in high school aged 16 to 22. MRC services begin at the high school level and extend through post—secondary activities with the ultimate outcome being employment. MRC is working closely with local school districts to identify students who require transition and WIOA pre—employment transition services. MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth and have developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has, for many years, worked in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to develop a wide array of programs and services to assist people with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. The MRC and CRPs have collaborated to develop programs including: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) and a wide array of support services essential in vocational rehabilitation. This collaborative relationship has been achieved through open communication, sharing of ideas and resources, mutual support and understanding and inclusiveness of all partners in the development of and implementation of service design.

The MRC develops programs and services with the participation of providers in several forums.

1. Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets twice annually. 2. Quarterly meetings with

representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers. 3. Periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs. 4. Interagency and cross—disability agency councils. 5. Task specific work teams. 6. Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment first (MAAPSE) In partnership with MRC, CRP personnel actively participated in the process for competitive procurement, CIES, the disability employment pilot project work team and the mental health services work team. This included for the first time real pricing of community rehabilitation program services and performance reimbursement.

The MRC/CIES program provides vocationally rehabilitative employment services for participants and through State funding the availability for extended on—going supports after closure. CIES comprises five components, each associated with a specific service outcome. Through the component based service delivery system, consumers are able to receive the comprehensive individualized services and supports they need to achieve and maintain successful employment. CIES services may carry over from year to year, with approximately 30% of consumers completing their program each year. CIES Components include: Assessment; Job—Targeted Educational and Skills Training activities; Job Development and Placement; Initial Employment Support services and On—going and Interim Support services.

Program Design: The CIES program provides consumers services toward gaining competitive employment through five component services. Consumers enter or exit different components based on needs. The measures of success for the program are the number of consumers placed in jobs for 30 days or more, called Job Placements; and the number of consumers employed beyond 90 days, called Successful Employment Outcomes (SEOs).

The State contracts with Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to deliver CIES services. Providers are paid on a performance basis during the initiation and completion phases of services. Using a data management and billing system called EIM (Enterprise Invoice Management), and internal tracking, the CIES team tracks program enrollment, expenditure and outcomes. Data from the EIM system allows detailed analysis of provider performance and program results. CIES providers have consistently expended about 60% of CIES resources on Job Development and Placement services. The number of consumers placed in jobs as a age of the number of total served has steadily increased. Budget reductions occurred through this period, based on the anticipated availability of federal funding. In FY15, MRC saw a year—to—year increase of 133 or 17% in successful employment outcomes, 899 CIES consumers (77% of all placements) reached competitive employment, with total annual earnings of about \$8 million (on—going support services are delivered through MRC Statewide Employment Services Department and is designed to help individuals with the most severe disabilities that have been transferred from segregated employment to integrated employment opportunities with competitive wages paid by an employer. For FY'16, the goal will be to exceed 1000 placements. CIES is one of several employment tools which MRC uses to assist consumers in obtaining competitive employment. CIES is often used to assist individuals with more complex disabilities or situations into integrated employment opportunities with competitive wages paid by an employer.

The MRC CIES team continuously monitors and evaluates performance quality to ensure that consumers are given the opportunity to achieve the best possible employment outcomes, using tools such as site visits, data analysis, monthly reporting, quarterly team meetings, and annual

provider and consumer surveys. The CIES program has proven its effectiveness in recent years by continuing to improve outcomes using available resources.

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

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

The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers through its Statewide Employment Services office as well as through its local Area Offices', forty four (44) community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health especially through its clubhouse programs.

In October 1997, a Community—Based Employment Service (CBES) service delivery system was developed through the Employment Services Advisory Committee formed by SES. Later that year, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), Developmental Services (DDS), Massachusetts Commission of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind (MCB) collaborated on the release of a competitive bid for CBES. It was the first ever, interagency collaboration of its kind. Because of this effort, a supported employment consumer will be able to access through their state agency or agencies, a system of supports in a more streamlined fashion that incorporates collaboration, consumer choice and is outcome driven. This effort is designed to offer all reasonable and allowable supports to consumers, including extended services. Through this effort the disability agencies have a consistent pay scale, defined outcomes and can now easily cost share the support services for people with disabilities. The CBES service delivery system continues, slightly modified, with the existing agencies, as the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) service delivery system today.

Evidence of Collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services:

The MRC, Statewide Employment Services (SES) Department has been designated as the lead office for the Massachusetts Supported Employment Initiative. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked with other human service agencies to identify and secure funding for extended supports for individuals in supported employment. Funding for extended services is available from several sources contingent upon the consumer's disability, eligibility and the resources available to each state agency. This service delivery system is currently in place enabling state agencies to cost share the appropriate services needed for consumers to choose, find and maintain meaningful competitive supported employment. With the implementation of this initiative we have seen an increase in the availability of resources for extended services. However, the available funding is administered at local levels and each situation handled individually. Sources include:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (State Revenue)

Department of Developmental Services

Department of Mental Health

MRC Statewide Head Injury Program

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Social Security Administration Work Incentives

Private Sector Natural Supports

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote the collaboration with stake holders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of joint funded programs that have developed. Some examples of these collaborative programs are joint funding of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for individuals who are psychiatrically disabled between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries between the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

As previously stated, for many years MRC has been collaborating with state agencies to promote collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services. An excellent example of that collaboration is an initiative among the MRC Salem Area Office, the DDS, North Shore Area Office and SES. This collaborative served 25 individuals who were receiving Day Services through DDS. This supported employment initiative utilize the counseling and guidance of the VR Counselors, the program coordination of the SES VR Counselors, the employment services of the Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP's) and an the Service Coordination with an innovative position of "Facilitator" through the DDS. The agreement also assured long term support funding through DDS after successful employment outcome and VR closure.

Memorandum of Understandings: Further tangible evidence of MRC collaboration to promote supported employment is the recent initiative to develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DDS and the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

These MOUs are designed to improve collaboration, coordination and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive/supported employment outcomes for mutual consumers. This collaboration will be at the Regional and local levels. Through developing a process for conducting joint—service planning, implementing an ongoing data—sharing agreement, local liaisons/training and joint service planning, all consumers and specifically transition aged individuals be better served and able to achieve successful employment outcomes.

g. Coordination with Employers

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

1. VR services; and

MRC's robust account management system is designed for us to hear first from employers regarding their specific labor market needs. MRC has several employer advisory boards strategically located across the Commonwealth through which we receive labor market information. MRC produces a labor market summary for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and analyzes placement and employment trends by Standard Occupational Code. MRC will continue to strengthen agency use of labor market information. Employer feedback has led MRC to develop an annual statewide hiring event to help address the needs of our consumers. MRC has regular local office briefings with employers on local labor needs. All of these enhance the agency's knowledge on local and statewide labor market needs. MRC utilizes job matching tools such as ResuMate to assist with job matching efforts to accommodate the needs of our consumers and employer partners.

MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth's effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies. MRC subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies and will work closely with WIOA core partners to expand services to employers.

MRC is continuing to target new employers and expand its employer account management system. Examples include the MRC Pharmacy Technician Training Program in direct partnership with CVS Health. The MRC VR division received a distinguished award (the Gould Award) from the Associated Industries of Massachusetts for its innovative pharmacy technician initiative with CVS. MRC has also received White House recognition for its Working Partners collaboration with Spaulding Rehabilitation Network.

As of SFY 2015, the JPS (Job Placement Specialist)/ESS (Employment Service Specialist) unit has implemented three Federal Hiring Events in partnership with MCB and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to assist consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. Over 300 individuals over the last 3 years have been employed through this annual one day event. MRC is looking to expand this model to other employers based on the success of the program.

WIOA emphasizes the use of job—driven and industry—based training through employer engagement. Use of the MRC's on—the—job (OJT) training and evaluation strategy has increased significantly. Many consumers who participate in an OJT obtain employment with the OJT employer and others are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT through which they gained a recent work experience. There were 190 OJT/OJE in 2014, 198 in 2015. MRC's job driven training initiative with Advanced Auto Parts as resulted as of this date with over 80% of the participants receiving job offers.

MRC has developed a project with Manpower Training and Development Center to secure occupational web—based training, skills development and job matching for consumers in ten areas including: Microsoft Office Suite (2007—2010) Microsoft Word, Excel and Power; Customer Service; Call Center, Administrative Assistant and Receptionist, Office and Clerical support, Packing and Product Preparation, Shipping and Receiving, Materials Inspection, Preparation for Employment, and Equipment Assembly. A total of 142 customers have been referred to date with 54 consumers referred in 2015.

Other job—driven trainings have been developed with Advance Auto Parts for Sales and Driver positions; Enterprise for Service Agent, Driver, and Lot Attendant, The Home Depot, Lowes, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, and Allied Barton Security Services. MRC also held its first employer conference on October 28, 2015 to strengthen relationships with existing employers and to develop new ones.

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

MRC will work with employers to coordinate transition services, including pre—employment transition services, for students and youths with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MRC provides OJT training specifically for youth and high school students with disabilities in vocational technical schools with CVS Caremark and Manpower that will offer both short and long term work based learning experiences to develop both skills and job readiness.

In Summer 2015, MRC developed a summer internship program for high school students and youths with disabilities in partnership with employers across the Commonwealth. These work—based learning experiences included workplace readiness training and provided valuable work experience and mentorship opportunities for participants. Over 300 internships were provided in the summer of 2015. These programs will continue to move forward as part of MRC's plan.

h. Interagency Cooperation

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

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

MRC and the Executive Office have developed and signed a Cooperative Agreement to work collaboratively to promote the provision of services and long—term supports for individuals with disabilities who require such services to obtain and maintain competitive employment in accordance with WIOA. The MOU will be revised as needed in the future,

Cooperative Agreement: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Office of Medicaid

This Cooperative Agreement is being entered into between the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Office of Medicaid.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Cooperative Agreement is to ensure that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (the state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency) and EOHHS, the state agency responsible for administering the state's Medicaid program (through its Office of Medicaid) work collaboratively, to the extent practicable, to promote the provision of services and long term supports for people with disabilities who require long—term supports in order to obtain and maintain employment. This Cooperative Agreement is in accordance with Section 412(a)(7)(H) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which requires a state's VR agency to have a formal cooperative agreement with the state's Medicaid agency with respect to

the delivery of VR services for individuals who have been determined to be eligible for Home and Community—Based Services (HCBS) under a Medicaid HCBS waiver.

COLLABORATION: MRC and EOHHS' Office of Medicaid have a well—established and long—standing relationship. MRC and the EOHHS' Office of Medicaid are committed to the promotion of independence and self—sufficiency through access to HCBS services for individuals with disabilities.

Pursuant to this Cooperative Agreement, MRC and EOHHS' Office of Medicaid, through joint planning and sharing of information, will work collaboratively to promote access to competitive integrated employment and will work to increase the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities needing, and eligible to receive, long—term supports in order to find and keep a job.

In line with this Cooperative Agreement, MRC, and EOHHS state the following:

A. MRC provides the following services to individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services, based on individual needs: a. vocational assessment, b. vocational counseling and guidance, c. funds for training/education, job placement, d. follow—up supports after training. B. EOHHS through its Office of Medicaid administers, and MRC serves as the Operating Agency for, certain HCBS Waivers through which individuals with disabilities may receive long term services and supports in the community. The availability of such supports works to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and economic self—sufficiency in the community. Many individuals receiving VR services from MRC are also enrolled in Mass Health (the state Medicaid program) and through Mass Health are supported in their efforts to live and work as independently as possible in the community.

C. Through participation in one of MassHealth's HCBS waivers and/or utilization of MassHealth State Plan services, disabled Mass Health members may receive services that support their efforts to obtain competitive integrated employment. These services may include, as appropriate:

1. Community Living Supports: A range of MassHealth state plan and HCBS waiver services that enable an individual to live in the community as an alternative to institutional care and which may include such services as home health aide and homemaker services, individualized home supports, independent living supports, home/environmental accessibility modifications, and personal care.
2. Pre—vocational Services: A range of learning and experiential type activities that prepare an individual for paid or unpaid employment in an integrated, community setting. Services may include teaching such concepts as attendance, task completion, problem solving and safety as well as social skills training, improving attention span and developing or improving motor skills.

D. Additionally, the following services may be available to eligible individuals receiving VR services from MRC or who are enrolled in a MassHealth HCBS waiver, subject to the rules and regulations governing each program: 1. Vehicle Modification 2. Transportation 3. Home/environmental accessibility modification 4. Supported Employment Services

COMMUNICATION Designated MRC and EOHHS Office of Medicaid staff will communicate on an ongoing basis, at least annually, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to long term supports for mutual consumers under a MassHealth HCBS waiver program.

PROCEDURES FOR AMENDMENTS This Cooperative Agreement may be modified by mutual agreement of the parties. Any such modification will be preceded by Thirty (30) days written notice to all parties of the intent to modify this Cooperative Agreement. **SIGNATORIES** By signing this agreement, all parties agree that the provisions contained herein are subject to all applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations or guidelines. By signatures affixed below, the parties specify their agreement:

Adelaide Osborne, Commissioner Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Daniel Tsai, Assistant Secretary MassHealth

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

MRC and the Department of Developmental Services have signed a memorandum of Agreement to work collaboratively through joint planning and sharing of resources to expand access to integrated employment services to increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, especially those of transition age who have a goal of competitive employment and are eligible for services from both agencies. An updated agreement was signed by both agency commissioners and effective as of 11/4/2015. The MOU will be revised as needed in the future.

Memorandum of Agreement

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Department of Developmental Services

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is being entered into by the named constituent agencies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Purpose:

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Department of Developmental Services through joint planning, and sharing of resources, will strive to expand access to integrated employment services and increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, in particular those individuals of transition age, who have a goal of competitive employment and are eligible for services from both agencies.

Anticipated Outcomes:

1. Increase the number of transition age individuals with intellectual disabilities who obtain and maintain competitive employment.
2. Improved collaboration, coordination and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive employment outcomes for our mutual consumers. This will include funding from MRC for the up front employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long—term, ongoing employment support services to help individuals successfully maintain competitive job placements.
3. Adherence to the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver Program requirements for the delivery of supported employment services.

4. Improved outreach, communication and coordination with local schools, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, employers and other stake holders in serving our mutual consumers.

5. Enhanced communication between DDS and MRC.

Service Agreement:

1. Eligibility Criteria:

a. Individuals who have been determined eligible for adult services by the Department of Developmental Services and are eligible for MRC services.

b. Individuals who have a goal of employment in an individual, competitive, integrated job working full—time or part—time. (Individuals would be hired by the business/employer, earning at least minimum wage and eligible for the benefits other employees in similar positions receive.)

c. Individuals who can benefit from the employment services provided by MRC to reach their employment goal. This includes individuals who may need long—term, ongoing, job supports from DDS to enable them to successfully maintain employment.

2. Target Group:

Individuals of Transition—Age (18 to 22), who are moving from school to adult life, and individuals up to age 24, with a particular focus on assisting students/young adults who have had work experience while in school, to assist them to directly enter a job upon completion of school, and/or to maintain a job obtained during their last year of school.

Adults who are over the age of 24, are eligible for services from both DDS and MRC, and have a goal of working in a competitive job.

3. Referral Process:

a. The DDS Area Office/Transition Coordinator will make a referral to the local MRC office at least one year before the student is scheduled to leave school.

b. MRC counselors may also identify individuals who have been referred to their agency for services to determine if they are also DDS eligible, and will contact the local DDS Area Office to confirm eligibility.

4. Services Provided

a. Both the DDS Transition/Service Coordinator and MRC Counselor will be participating members of relevant individual planning team processes, (including IEP—Individual Education Plan; ITP—Individual Transition Plan; IEP— Individual Plan for Employment IPE; ISP— Individual Support Plan).

b. Individuals may be eligible for the full array of services available through MRC based on MRC policy and their needs.

c. Based on an individual's needs, it is expected that MRC will fund the upfront employment services which may include assessment, skills training, job placement, and initial job coaching and on—the—job supports.

d. For individuals who will require ongoing job coaching and employment supports to successfully maintain employment, DDS will provide funding for these long—term, ongoing employment services. These services will be provided by DDS following the successful closure of the individual's case with MRC, which will not occur prior to a period of 90 days retention on the job.

5. Communication and Coordination of Services between Agencies:

a. There will be regular communication between MRC and DDS local area staff to facilitate collaboration, joint planning for service delivery, cross—agency information sharing and training to ensure all parties have current information about agency policies and practices including those related to referrals, eligibility requirements, and other pertinent information.

b. Area Directors and/or other lead designated staff will identify a process for identifying referrals and for regular communication to monitor services and other collaborative initiatives.

c. It will be important to clarify the expected responsibilities and roles of staff in each agency to support local service planning and service delivery. This will be determined by DDS and MRC managers at the local level. It is expected that both the MRC counselor and DDS Service Coordinator will work closely together with individuals when joint services are being provided, communicating regularly, participating in planning meetings, etc., to ensure an integrated and responsive approach when working with individuals and their families/guardians. This will promote a strong partnership to assist in addressing problems or concerns that might arise both on—the—job and outside of work that may have an impact on performance, as well as facilitate planning for ongoing employment support.

d. MRC counselors and DDS staff will abide by agency practices regarding regular communication, participation in planning meetings and collaboration in ensuring an integrated and responsive approach to working with consumers, their families/guardians and other community resources.

6. Reporting/Data Collection

A system for tracking the services provided to individuals jointly eligible for MRC and DDS services will be developed and implemented in order to assess the referrals, outcomes, impact and effectiveness of services provided to individuals who receive services as part of this MOA. Each MRC and DDS Area Office will be required to provide documentation on a regular basis.

This Memorandum of Agreement will be reviewed annually by the leadership of both agencies to identify areas for clarification, improvement, or additions to further promote collaboration and successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

This Memorandum of Agreement becomes effective as of January 17th, 2012.

Charles Carr

Commissioner

Date: 1—13—2012

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Elin M. Howe

Commissioner

Date: 1—13—2012

Department of Developmental Services

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

MRC and the Department of Mental Health Services have a Memorandum of Understanding effective as of June 14, 2014 to work collaboratively to identify the individuals that they mutually serve by implementing an ongoing data collection system, to foster joint service planning and interagency training to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for individuals with severe mental illness. The MOU will be revised as needed.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION AND THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

I. Purpose

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation (MRC) (collectively the "Agencies"), in recognition that employment is essential to the independence, dignity, and recovery of persons with serious mental illness, seek to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for the individuals they mutually serve, by improving inter—agency communications throughout their organizational structure; engaging in joint service planning at the individual and program levels, and formalizing a plan for on—going collaboration. DMH and MRC, through this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), therefore seek to:

1. Establish an ongoing collaborative relationship between MRC, DMH, and their contracted providers, at the individual, site, area and executive levels;
2. Develop a system for regularly identifying the individuals they mutually serve;
3. Develop and implement a process that will facilitate DMH and MRC timely referring to each other individual who could benefit from receiving both MRC and DMH services;
4. Develop and implement a process for conducting joint—service planning for individuals mutually served by both agencies to enhance the individuals' employment opportunities;
5. Ensure that appropriate DMH and MRC staff are informed and trained on the services of the respective agencies provided to promote referrals, consultations regarding referrals and joint—service planning when appropriate;
6. Implement an ongoing data—sharing agreement to track employment service delivery and the outcomes associated with of such mutually—served individuals, to that will help the Agencies assess the effectiveness of this MOU; and
7. Develop a mechanism for exploring, developing and implementing joint initiatives beneficial to the individuals mutually served by the Agencies, including but not limited to the pursuit of new resources.

II. Identification of the Mutually Shared Individuals and Data Collection

1. Data Sharing Agreement. The Agencies agree to implement the attached data sharing agreement (Exhibit A) immediately for the purpose of establishing the current individuals they mutually serve.
2. IT Joint Workgroup. After the identification of the individuals who are currently being mutually served by the Agencies, the Agencies MOU Contact Persons (identified in Section VI, below) shall facilitate the creation of a workgroup staffed by both agencies to determine how this shared population can be regularly updated. In addition, the workgroup shall determine how to capture and facilitate the sharing of information identified by the workgroup described in Section III.3.
3. Data for Assessing Effectiveness of MOU. The Commissioners of DMH and MRC, or their designees, will ensure that the Agencies establish protocols for capturing the following data to be used to assess the effectiveness of the MOU:
 - a. The Annual number of mutually served individuals statewide
 - b. The Annual number of mutually served individuals who have been successfully closed by MRC
 - c. The Annual number of mutually served individuals who have been successfully closed by MRC with extended supports provided by DMH
 - d. The Annual number of mutually served individuals who have been unsuccessfully closed by MRC
 - e. The Annual number of DMH referrals to MRC
 - f. The Annual number of MRC referrals to DMH
 - g. Other such data as is allowed per data—sharing agreements, as necessary and agreed upon.
4. Consumer Input. MRC and DMH acknowledge the importance of input from persons utilizing the services described in this MOU and will incorporate such input in the evaluation of its effectiveness and functionality.

III. Local Liaisons/Training/Joint Service Planning

1. Local Liaisons. Each DMH Site Office, DMH facility, MRC Area Office, and the MRC Statewide Employment Services Department (SES) will designate a liaison(s) to serve as a central—point of contact and resource for the other Agency. The Liaisons must:

- a. Provide their counterparts with information about and answer questions regarding their Agency's eligibility or referral process and the services they provide;
- b. Provide guidance to and/or confer with their counterparts, or designees, about the appropriateness of referring a specific individual served by one of the Agencies to the other for additional services; and when appropriate, helping to facilitate the filing and processing of the required application or referral form.* For this purpose, the Agencies acknowledge
 - i. Referrals to MRC shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person—referred:
 1. Is interested in competitive, integrated employment, and
 2. Has the potential to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, including supported employment services, in order to achieve job readiness (as defined below) and competitive employment.
 3. Job readiness shall not be a prerequisite for MRC eligibility. Job readiness is when an individual, following a period of preparation for work, can demonstrate specific work and social skills needed to qualify for a job.

- ii. Referrals to DMH shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person—referred:
 1. Is interested in, and in need of, the services DMH offers, and
 2. Is likely to meet criteria for DMH services.
- c. Help facilitate the coordination of employment related services provided by DMH, MRC or contracted providers to individuals mutually served by the Agencies*;
- d. Assist in resolving issues that may arise regarding an application for services, a referral for services and/or the coordination of care.*
- e. Notify or ensure notification to their counterpart/and/or the referral source as to the outcome of an application or referral filed on

behalf of an individual being served by the other agency: and f. Ensure that the Agencies MOU Contact Persons have updated contact information for them.

Authorization to share information may be required from the respective individual for the sharing of information. When an authorization is required to allow for communications between the Agencies, the Agencies will implement procedures for ensuring that authorizations are sought. The Agencies acknowledge, however, that authorizations cannot be mandated.

2. Training. a. DMH and MRC, subject to available funding, agree to co—sponsor a state—wide MRC/DMH Training and Collaboration Forum for employees of DMH and MRC within one year of the start date of this MOU. The purpose of the forum is to further the goals of the MOU. DMH and MRC will seek to co—sponsor additional MRC/DMH Training and Collaboration Forums during the term of this MOU as are determined needed and feasible.

b. The MRC and DMH Directors of Training, or their designees, will meet at least annually to (i) review their planned trainings to determine if there are opportunities to open any to the staff of the other Agency (pending interest, availability of space and slots) and (ii) plan for joint trainings when appropriate.

c. DMH will provide a representative for planning and consultative purposes for MRC’s Annual Mental Health Liaison Forum. 3. Joint Service Planning. a. At the State Level . The Agencies’ MOU Contact Persons will facilitate the creation of a workgroup staffed by both agencies and contracted providers, as applicable, to establish protocols for the Agencies that will ensure compliance with the terms of this MOU and that the care of mutually served individuals in need of enhanced support to obtain or retain competitive employment will be coordinated to the extent practical and feasible. The protocols shall address: i. When authorizations are needed; ii. What information should be shared and the mechanism for sharing such information (e.g., what, when, how, and who); iii. The role of the individual; iv. Provider Involvement v. Key coordination points and the communications and actions to be taken at such points including but not limited to: 1. The period between an individual being referred to MRC and MRC services formally commencing; and 2. When individuals I) have completed a minimum of ninety—days of sustained employment; 2) have achieved a successful employment outcome (i.e. Status 26); and 3) demonstrate a need for extended supports to successfully maintain employment, DMH and MRC will coordinate and secure extended supports as reasonable, allowable, and consistent with the preferences of the person served. To the extent permissible under State and Federal privacy law, it is expected that MRC, prior to discharging a mutually shared individual, will convene a discharge planning meeting that includes DMH, applicable DMH service providers, and the individual to plan, when appropriate, for supports as necessary to assist the individual in maintaining employment. vi. Other such topics as are necessary to comply with and advance the goals of this MOU.

b. At the Regional Level. Each DMH Area Director and MRC District Director or their designee, shall meet with their counterpart, and with and the Statewide SES Director, or his/her designee, at least annually to address communication or collaboration issues and to address opportunities for additional collaborations.

c. At the Local Level. DMH Site Directors and MRC Area Directors, or their designees, will ensure that regular and as—needed communications occur between themselves and their respective offices to facilitate collaboration, joint planning for service delivery, and cross—

agency information sharing. They shall develop protocols as needed to help resolve identified problems. In addition they shall so promote trainings to ensure all parties, including contracted providers, have current information about agency policies and practices, including those related to referrals and eligibility requirements. They shall help facilitate implementation of the product developed by the workgroup described in Section III.3.ii, and support local liaisons described in Section III.1. Local offices shall seek to include contracted providers in local workgroups created to further the purpose herein described.

IV. New Initiatives and Assessment of MOU The Commissioners of DMH and MRC, or their designees, will meet at least annually to: a. Review the implementation and effectiveness of this MOU, including possible areas of clarification or improvement; b. Assess opportunities for additional collaborations, including joint—pursuit of new funding or blended funding; trainings agencies; and c Discuss other areas of focus as relevant and mutually agreed upon to further promote the successful employment and vocational rehabilitation of individuals in recovery with mental illness.

The MOU Contact Persons should work with the Commissioners, or designees, to formulate agendas for this meeting and for ensuring meeting minutes are captured. V. Duration and Amendments 1. Duration. This MOU shall become effective on the last signature date set forth below and it shall remain in full force and effect until (i) it is terminated by either Agency by giving sixty (60) written notice to the other Agency or (ii) if latter, June 30, 2025. 2.

Amendments. An amendment to this MOU will be effective only if in writing and signed by both Agencies. VI. Memorandum of Understanding Contacts

1. DMH Contact Person Michael Stepansky, DMH Director of Employment Phone: (508)—616—3522 Email: Michael.Stepansky@massmail.state.ma.us 2. MRC Contact Person Ted Mello, MRC Cape & Islands Area Director Phone: (508)—862—6643 Email: Edward.Mello@massmail.state.ma.us 3. Each agency may from time to time change its contact person above, upon appropriate notice to the other which shall include notice to the General Counsel for the other agency.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH Marcia Fowler Commissioner Date: 6—14—2014

MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION Charles Carr Commissioner Date: 5—13—2014

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

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

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

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

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

The Commission employs a total of 810 persons, 459 of whom are employed in the VR Program. Of this number, 281 VR counselors and first line supervisors, 31 are managers and 147 are program, technical, or administrative staff. All numbers represent full and part—time staff, not FTE. 28.6% of Commission staff is from minority backgrounds, 76.2% are women, 16.5% are persons with disabilities, and 1.6% are Vietnam—era Veterans.

Most counselors carry “general caseloads” consisting of consumers representing all disability populations; a smaller number of counselors carry “specialty” caseloads consisting primarily of consumers with the same/similar disabilities (i.e., severe mobility impairments, psychiatric disabilities). The Commission has served a total of consumers (in all statuses) annually which ranged from 30,599 to 34,640 in 2015. Looking forward, it is anticipated that the Commission will be serving at a minimum of 30,000 to 33,000 consumers (in all statuses) annually.

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

To adequately serve these numbers of individuals the number of VR counselors, first—line supervisors and managers would need to be maintained at the current level. MRC faces many personnel challenges in the next few years. In a workforce analysis conducted in 2012, 52% of employees were over the age of 60 with 68% eligible for retirement in 2019. This represents an increase in the average annual attrition rate from a historical rate of 5 to 7% to 8%. In addition, MRC faces challenges in recruiting entry—level VR counselors due to the small number of programs offering vocational rehabilitation counseling and the competition from private sector employment opportunities. Many other individuals will be approaching retirement age within the next five to 10 years as the average age in the Commission is 50 with over 20 years of agency experience. Several of these individuals are in manager and administrative positions in the central office which are paid through VR monies and many more are counselor, first line supervisor and manager positions in the field. At this time, MRC is able to back fill vacant staff positions and use post retirement staff and interns to cover caseloads. MRC will be evaluating these approaches as part of an updated workforce plan in 2016.

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

MRC faces many personnel challenges in the next few years. In a workforce analysis conducted in 2012, 52% of employees were over the age of 60 with 68% eligible for retirement in 2019. This represents an increase in the average annual attrition rate from a historical rate of 5 to 7% to 8%. In addition, MRC faces challenges in recruiting entry—level VR counselors due to the small number of programs offering vocational rehabilitation counseling and the competition from private sector employment opportunities. Many other individuals will be approaching retirement age within the next five to 10 years as the average age in the Commission is 50 with over 20 years of agency experience. Several of these individuals are in manager and administrative positions in the central office which are paid through VR monies and many more are counselor, first line supervisor and manager positions in the field. At this time, MRC is able to back fill vacant staff positions and use post retirement staff and interns to cover caseloads. MRC will be evaluating these approaches as part of an updated workforce plan in 2015.

The chart below represents the vacancies that were posted for this past year with projections based on this year projected over 5 years. A vacancy in a manager position can create vacancies at lower levels of the agency for example an area director vacancy may be filled by a unit supervisor creating a vacancy at that level which would be filled by a vocational counselor creating a vacancy in a counselor position. As stated previously these totals can also be affected by funding issues at the federal and state level.

Projections:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Total Positions: 267

Current Vacancies: 11

Projected Vacancies over next 5 years: 124

Managers

Total Positions: 43

Current Vacancies: 1

Projected Vacancies over next 5 years: 10

Program/Technical or Administrative Staff

Total Positions: 149

Current Vacancies: 3

Projected Vacancies over next 5 years: 36

B. Personnel Development

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

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

Universities in Massachusetts that have Rehabilitation Counseling programs at the bachelor and masters' level are: University of Massachusetts at Boston, Springfield College and Assumption College. Salve Regina is located in Rhode Island.

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

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs either full—time or part—time as rehabilitation “majors” at the colleges and universities referenced.

Last year one (1) person has completed the Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling program. MRC also anticipates two (2) additional graduates will complete their Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in the forthcoming year

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

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor's degree and upwards of 60 graduate—level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the institutions.

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

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

The MRC's plan for recruitment includes meeting with representatives from the Commission's Staff Development Department will continue to communicate on a quarterly basis with officials of the CORE accredited rehabilitation departments and officials responsible for minority outreach at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston regarding pertinent information on the preparation of rehabilitation professionals and for the specific purpose of recruiting graduates for employment in the federal/state VR Program. Special emphasis will be given to students with disabilities and students from minority backgrounds. Additionally, Commission staff also regularly addresses rehabilitation students in the classroom setting providing them with an overview of the agency and the public rehabilitation program. Internal job postings are automatically sent to these institutions informing them of job openings and procedures to apply. A number of rehabilitation students also complete their field placement and practicum experience within the Commission affording them a realistic view of work in the Commission. The Commission has sponsored 84 paid internships since 2008; 41 of those interns have been hired as full time employees as Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors I/II or III's. MRC is anticipating 124 vacant QVRC positions over the next 5 years.

The Commission also maintains relationships with nearly 40 minority referral sources and routinely forwards all job postings to them thereby encouraging application for employment at all job levels from persons from minority backgrounds. Position openings are routinely advertised in minority and alternative newspapers (i.e. Boston Globe, Bay State Banner, Worcester Telegram and Gazette) and posted internally and externally on the Internet (MASSCareers, Indeed, Monster, SimplyHired, and LinkedIn).

3. Personnel Standards

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is utilizing a state approved certified Human Resource Division classification standard, to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. There are three levels of classifications in the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) series. Incumbents of classifications in this series administer functional, skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and observations; develop, implement and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE); and provide job placement assistance and job development skills. The basic purpose of this work is to evaluate individuals with physical, emotional or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services as mandated by federal statutes and guidelines.

There are three levels of classification in the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) series. Incumbents of classifications in this series administer functional, skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and observations; develop, implement and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE); and provide job placement assistance and job development skills.

The basic purpose of this work is to evaluate individuals with physical, emotional or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Investment Act. QVRC- I is an entry-level position. QVRC- II is the fully competent level classification in the series and QVRC III is a supervisory level position. The following is the state certified Human Resource Division classification standard to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA:

1. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR I:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the entry-level classification in this series. Incumbents perform work under guidance and within a framework of defined policies, procedures and standards. Incumbents seek guidance and advice from more experienced colleagues and focus on gaining the knowledge and experience to perform more independently and participate in work of a higher complexity.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive close supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide direction, training, instruction, work assignments and frequent reviews of performance through formal and informal verbal and written reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, rules, regulations and agency policies.

Incumbents may receive general direction from other work units to ensure accuracy and compliance with funding requirements.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional guidance to new employees.

Functions Performed: At this level, Incumbents are expected to perform one or more of the following:

Conduct intake interviews with consumers who have physical, emotional, psychiatric or other disabilities to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Determine eligibility through review and analysis of records, tests, observations and interviews, to identify consumers'

needs and occupational interests and abilities, and to provide assistance with securing competitive employment. Make recommendations on appropriate programs and treatment interventions based on evaluation of needs. Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for consumers, including rehabilitation teaching, social rehabilitation orientation, physical and mental restoration, vocational and on-the-job training, educational services, and pre and post-employment services. Maintain accurate records using information technology resources. Develop and maintain working relationships with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers and community groups to exchange information and resolve problems, to promote agency services and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs and employment and other consumer placement resources. Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors and other public agencies. Conduct individual skills training sessions based on the IPE to ensure that the needs of the consumers are being met. Conduct group workshops for consumers to prepare for job opportunities, and coordinate the methods, materials and equipment used in training sessions. Monitor and evaluate consumer progress through individual meetings and on-site visits to ensure that the needs of the consumers are being met. Prepare and maintain case and progress notes for general information and to document and monitor changes to an individual's overall progress. Explain and answer inquiries made by consumers and/or their families and other interested parties relating to agency programs, objectives and services. Monitor and evaluate the consumer's progress through individual meetings, on-site visits and review of reports to assist consumer adjustment to new situations and determine whether or not services, programs or job placement is meeting the needs of the consumer.

Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Recommend how to proceed with the job referral process. Determine accommodation and training needs that may be required in the workplace and determine if training or other employer intervention strategies are needed post- placement in order to maintain consumer placement. Recommend purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for job placement. Recommend consumers to employers for employment opportunities. Prioritize cases/work flow. Develop, implement and monitor IPE with the consumer.

Relationships with Others: Key contacts and relationships for incumbents include consumers and their families/legal guardians; supervisors and agency managers and staff; medical professionals; legal officials; vendors and contractors; and community members and/or organizations involved with consumers and/or their families/legal guardians.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards

Physical Abilities: While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to

assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education and Experience: Applicants must have a (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor or (B) the substitution listed below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

1. Knowledge of evaluation methods and techniques to determine individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences. 2. Knowledge of the principles and practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social and independent living needs. 3. Ability to gather information through questioning and observing individuals and by examining records and documents to assess consumer needs. 4. Ability to use a computer to conduct research, manage databases and produce written documents. 5. Ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand; ability to appropriately document case activities and represent the agency in a professional manner. 6. Ability to interact effectively and establish rapport with diverse teams and groups of people. 7. Ability to maintain a calm manner and interact appropriately with others in emotionally charged or stressful situations. 8. Ability to analyze and determine the applicability of data, draw conclusions and make appropriate recommendations. 9. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

2. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the fully competent professional level classification in this series. Incumbents have thorough knowledge of policies, practices, and techniques and have mastered the technical job content, perform work of greater complexity, exercise greater independence in making decisions and receive less supervision and review. At this level incumbents have sign off authority for individual caseloads and handle complex cases or transferred cases requiring exceptional mastery.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive general supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide work assignments and facilitate performance reviews through formal and informal

verbal and written reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, rules, regulations and agency policies.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and assistance with tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees and interns.

Additional Functions Performed: Incumbents perform the following: Consult with Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure that the skills and abilities of the consumer are an effective employment match. Provide vocational rehabilitation counseling advice to consumers deemed to present particular difficult challenges, such as persons with multiple disabilities, persons who have been unsuccessful with other rehabilitation counselors and persons who have an extended history with the agency to ensure provision of appropriate services. Confer with agency staff, consumers' families, employers, professional specialists and others to exchange consumer information and determine the appropriateness of employment opportunities and resources for education, training and job placement assistance. Assist in maintaining a relationship with the local Career Centers for the purpose of providing consumers with information about employment opportunities, job seeking and methods of applying for current employment opportunities.

Based on assignment, incumbents may perform one or more of the following: Participate in the development of at least one statewide or regional training program. Design, implement and conduct group workshops. Represent local offices at regional and statewide placement meetings and participate in local/regional/statewide initiatives. Monitor and evaluate employer satisfaction post-placement through on-site visits and telephone calls. Lead and organize office quality improvement projects. Provide technical assistance or act as an office liaison regarding specific populations to ensure outreach and appropriate service delivery to specific and underserved groups. Provide training and education to employers regarding the skills, abilities and limitations of consumers. Consult with employers to determine job expectations and market these employment expectations to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and make specific recommendations to employers for hiring consumers.

Additional Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Determine content of training materials for group workshops. Independently manage and decision making ability to sign off on individual case load.

Relationships with Others: Key contacts and relationships for incumbents include consumers and their families/legal guardians; supervisors and agency managers and staff; medical professionals; legal officials; vendors and contractors; and community members and/or organizations involved with consumers and/or their families/legal guardians.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office setting and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards.

Physical Ability: While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience: Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents must satisfy all the requirements of the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I level plus the following at the time of hire:

1. Knowledge of the types and availability of public and private community based organizations providing vocational rehabilitation services to consumers. 2. Knowledge of the characteristics and trends of the local labor market. 3. Knowledge of the principles and practices of vocational counseling. 4. Knowledge of agency rules, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines governing assigned responsibilities. 5. Ability to act as a mentor and provide guidance to others.

3. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR III:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the supervisory classification in this series and based on assignment may be a non-supervisory contract coordinator. Incumbents provide supervision and guidance on complex or specialized casework to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II's within their work unit. At this level, incumbents may perform the duties for

Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Levels I and II's but the primary focus is to provide formal and informal supervision and act as the liaison between Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and agency management.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive general supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide guidance, statistical review of unit and performance reviews through both formal and informal reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, regulations and agency policies.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may exercise direct supervision over, assign work to and review the performance of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II or other employees of a lower grade.

Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I and Level II or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and delegation of tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees.

Incumbents may participate in the interviewing process or may make recommendations for new hires.

Additional Functions Performed: Incumbents perform the following: Supervise and monitor unit activities such as consumer evaluations and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency policies and standards. Establish and maintain program and unit information systems. Prepare and monitor program and/or unit budget and allocation of funds. Develop and implement policies and procedures for assigned units and programs in accordance with agency regulations and applicable laws. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs. Assist in the development and implementation of consumer needs assessment programs. Promote agency services to ensure appropriate referrals to the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. Coordinate state and federal compliance review audits; gather sample studies, conduct in-house reviews of cases for compliance and provide requested materials, information and evaluations to ensure agency compliance with federal, state and agency policies, procedures and regulations regarding vocational rehabilitation. Coordinate Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) referrals; act as office liaison on all matters related to SSI/SSDI consumers receiving benefits from the Social Security Administration. Act as liaison regarding specific disabilities or special populations by attending meetings and providing information to counselors to ensure that the agency is reaching the specific populations, and to discuss current information on the target groups. Based on assignment, develop and negotiate contracts and grants with appropriate vendors; develop, negotiate and manage contract service budgets in order to assure program effectiveness and compliance with state and federal guidelines, policies and procedures.

Additional Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Evaluate job performance of subordinates, participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs. Recommends contract and budget control actions by analyzing spending patterns and monthly and quarterly reports in order to maximize funds available for consumer services and to anticipate financial needs and assure appropriate transfer

of funds. Review and sign off on case load for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I's and QVRC II's as appropriate.

Relationships with Others: In addition to the contacts listed for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II, key contacts and relationships for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level III incumbents include regional directors, peers and advocates.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office setting and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards. **Physical Abilities:**

While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, of which one (1) year must have been in a supervisory or leadership capacity or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have all the requirements of the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I & II level plus the following at the time of hire:

1. Thorough knowledge of the types and availability of public and private community based organizations providing vocational rehabilitation services to consumers. 2. Thorough knowledge of the characteristics and trends of the local labor market. 3. Knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of program budgeting. 4. Ability to supervise, including planning and assigning work according to the nature of the job to be accomplished, the capabilities of subordinates and available resources; controlling work through periodic reviews and/or evaluations; monitor and encourage subordinates to work effectively and efficiently; and determine the need for and wither recommend or initiate corrective action. 5. Ability to lead others and organize the efforts of others in accomplishing work objectives and performance standards. 6. Ability to communicate and work effectively with senior leaders.

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

All vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to meet at least the education and experience requirements of a QVRC. Promotional opportunities in the series would require more experience and/or a higher educational level.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION:

The commission's Staff Development Unit supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive in-service training program. A series of workshops and seminars is planned in the following priority areas: basic rehabilitation practices, advanced rehabilitation practices, WIOA partnerships: employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, computer skills, and secretarial skill development, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC). The Commission is authorized to award Continuing Education Units from the Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. The Commonwealth's Board of Allied Health and Human Service Professions to maintain licensure also accepts these credits. In-service programs carry the appropriate number of continuing education units and enable staffs who qualify to maintain their counselor certification and/or meet licensure requirements. The unit has offered a series of training for managers, supervisors, as well as aspiring supervisors. These trainings are ongoing.

In addition to these in service training programs, MRC provides trainings to staff on 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits. These trainings are also available to employers at MRC's annual employer conference.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. Finally, MRC has developed and has operated an annual new staff orientation since 2011 to also assist with educating and retaining staff. MRC will be evaluating the results of these efforts as part of its 2016 update to the workforce plan.

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

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA training grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials. Additionally, each counselor and supervisor has a personal computer giving them access to a wide variety of software applications and thus putting a vast amount of information in the hands of both staff and consumers.

4. Staff Development.

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

A. System of staff development

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

The commission's Staff Development Unit supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive in—service training program. A series of workshops and seminars is planned in the following priority areas: basic rehabilitation practices, advanced rehabilitation practices, WIOA partnerships: employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, computer skills, and secretarial skill development, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC).

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Materials. Additionally, each counselor and supervisor has a personal computer giving them access to a wide variety of software applications and thus putting a vast amount of information in the hands of both staff and consumers.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

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

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

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA training grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials. Additionally, each counselor and supervisor has a personal computer giving them access to a wide variety of software applications and thus putting a vast amount of information in the hands of both staff and consumers.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

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

MRC has twelve VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf; thirty are fluent in Spanish and work with Hispanic consumers; four are able to communicate in Cantonese; two in Vietnamese, three are fluent in Portuguese; three are fluent in Khmer, three are fluent in French/Haitian Creole, and one counselor is fluent in Hindi and Tamil. A smaller number of area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full— and part—time sign language interpreters are also on staff. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters and CART reporters, as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters is geographically placed so as to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups. This strategy will continue to be applied and staff with specialized skills added, as appropriate, for the upcoming year and beyond.

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

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

The information in the State plan pertaining to the RSA requirements for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is coordinated and shared with the appropriate State

Department of Education unit consistent with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act to assure compliance and coordination of efforts.

j. Statewide Assessment

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in conjunction with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted its annual Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment (CSNA) in the Fall of 2014. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires the MRC to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment at least every three years, but the MRC administers it on an annual basis with the information and findings incorporated into the MRC's State Plan, Strategic Planning, and Quality Assurance Activities. The findings on consumer needs listed in this report are presented and shared with MRC Senior Management and VR staff, the entire body of the SRC, and other key stakeholders as part of the MRC's State Plan and continuous quality improvement processes. It is also publicly distributed via the MRC website. The 2014 CSNA process constituted a number of areas, including: a consumer survey; focus groups; analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts; findings from other reports and surveys including the Consumer, Provider, and Counselor Satisfaction surveys, among others; and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders.

The MRC 2014 Needs Assessment Survey was administered electronically via Survey Monkey in September and October 2014. A focus group of consumers was also conducted at the Consumer Conference in June 2014. There were 1,325 consumers who responded to the survey out of a total of 5,157 possible consumer recipients, for a response rate of 25.2%. The number of responses again exceeded the amount required to make statistically significant conclusions at a 99% confidence level, according to the Raosoft.com sample size calculator, by a wide margin. There was a 12.7% increase in the number of consumer respondents from the 2013 Needs Assessment Survey and a 19.4% increase in the number of consumers offered the opportunity to participate in the survey compared to 2013.

The main findings of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment can be summarized as follows:

1. The CSNA again confirms the fact that the majority of consumers served by the MRC are people with the most significant disabilities. The findings indicate that a majority of MRC consumers require multiple Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, transportation, and Community Living (CL) services and supports to assist them in their efforts to prepare for, choose, and obtain competitive employment. The need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and for individuals with cognitive or psychological disabilities. The findings suggest that many consumers also require supported employment and ongoing and extended employment supports. The need for multiple CL services was greatest among individuals with physical or sensory disabilities.

2. Overall, the majority of MRC consumers believe MRC services are addressing all or most of their needs. 80% of consumers feel MRC services are at least somewhat effective in meeting their vocational service needs (up 2% from 2012). The majority of consumers (79.3%) are somewhat or very satisfied with the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment. Many of those who feel MRC services are not meeting their needs indicate they have difficulty maintaining contact with their counselor, have not been provided consistent or adequate information on services, or have experienced changes in their assigned counselors due to high levels of staff turnover.
3. Many consumers expressed strong praise and gratitude for the hard work and support provided by the MRC and its counseling staff. It is clear that MRC and its staff make a significant positive impact on the lives of many of its consumers. A need raised by consumers included better contact with their counselor and more information about available services and MRC procedures, including information and referral to other agencies. Some consumers may not have a complete understanding of what the MRC can and cannot do for them.
4. The most important and needed VR services listed by consumers were job placement (89%), career counseling (84%), supported employment (80%), benefits planning (78%), ongoing supports to assist in retaining employment (74%), On—the—Job Training or Job Coaching (71%), and College Education (68%). School to work transition, obtaining a high school diploma, and college education were the most needed services by consumers of transition age.
5. The most important job characteristics that MRC consumers indicated they are looking for in a job include a friendly job environment (95%), job satisfaction and personal interests (95%), earning a living wage (94%), an adequate number of hours worked per week (94%), vacation and other leave benefits (89%), and promotional opportunities (88%).
6. The most common occupational areas of interest listed by MRC consumers included Community/Social/Human Services (36%), Administrative (29%), Health Care (29%), Self—Employment (26%), Customer Service (25%), and Computers/Information Technology (23%). All but Self—Employment are amongst the top 10 occupational goals by Standard Occupational Code (SOC) in consumer employment plans in the MRCIS Case Management System. The high interest amongst consumers in Self—Employment may be a function of the economy driving more people to go into self—employment. A number of consumers desired additional information on self—employment.
7. Only 32% of consumers indicated that they are aware of the Independent Living Center in their area. Individuals with psychological disabilities, younger consumers, and those in the South and North District tended to be less aware of ILCs compared to consumers with other types of disabilities.
8. Transportation continues to be an area of great need for MRC consumers. The most important and needed transportation services and options listed by consumers are public transportation (21%), the Donated Vehicle Program (18%), driver's education and training (10%), the Transportation Access Pass (10%), information about transportation options (7%), and The Ride/paratransit (7%).
9. 36% of consumers find transportation to be a potential barrier to obtaining employment. Common reasons for how transportation is a barrier include inability to access jobs via public transportation, the cost of transportation, reliability and the time required to travel via public

transit or paratransit, lack of access to a vehicle, lack of a driver's license, and the distance to available jobs.

10. The most important and needed Community Living services indicated by responding consumers were affordable, accessible housing and the Mass Access Housing Registry (59%), accessible recreational services (48%), the Consumer Involvement Program (40%), the Individual Consumer Consultant (ICC) program (39%), home care (33%), assistive technology (33%), and home modification (32%).

11. When factoring out consumers who indicate they do not require Community Living services, approximately 86% of MRC consumers indicated that MRC's services were somewhat or extremely useful in assisting them to maintain independence in the community. Many consumers reflected how the MRC's assistance has been tremendously valuable. Many consumers, however, were not aware of some or all of the CL services provided by the MRC. Others indicated they do not require CL services.

12. Finding affordable and accessible housing remains a challenge for many consumers due to economic conditions and the high cost of living in Massachusetts. The Independent Living Centers may be able to assist consumers in this area, and counselors may be able to refer consumers to other resources as well.

13. A total of 18% of consumers feel they require additional services and supports. This number has fallen by about 5% since 2011. These services include job placement and job training, financial assistance, transportation, affordable and accessible housing, information on available service, assistive technology, and services and supports from other state agencies.

14. The most important single service consumers are receiving includes job placement and job search services, assistance with college education, job training, vocational counseling and guidance, assistive technology, transportation, and assistance with obtaining supplies for school and work.

15. The majority of MRC counselors are satisfied with their ability to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining competitive employment based on their skills, interests, needs, and choices. MRC counselors are at least somewhat satisfied with most services provided to consumers, including internal job placement services, services from Community Rehabilitation Providers, and education and training provided to consumers by schools and colleges. Communication with consumers and providers was also identified by counselors as an area for improvement. Counselors identified some areas that would assist them in doing their job better, including improved support and resources for job placement, increased information on job leads for consumers, additional job readiness trainings, and continued enhancements to the MRCIS system, among others.

16. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also are somewhat or very satisfied with CRP services. Improved communication and information flow between CRPs and MRC staff may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes. Recent vendor expansion efforts appear to have addressed CRP capacity needs, but there still appears to be additional capacity needed in certain geographic areas and for certain populations.

17. There are areas where additional MRC staff training may assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of VR services delivered to consumers. Specific areas include refresher trainings on the MRCIS case management system as well as on VR best practices, policies, and procedures and proper documentation of records.

18. The MRC has identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being slightly underserved by the MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. It is important to note that proportionally Asians have been the fastest growing group amongst all ethnic and racial groups served by the MRC's VR program over the last 10 years. This is also true in the state's general population. It is recommended that the MRC continue its outreach efforts to Asian communities. MRC has translated key agency marketing and information materials and is also working on translating all MRCIS correspondence letters into several Asian languages common in Massachusetts including Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer as part of its Language Access Plan.

19. MRC is enhancing its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment process to incorporate the assessment of the needs for pre—employment transition services by students with disabilities in the Commonwealth. MRC has added additional questions into its Needs Assessment Survey instrument and Counselor surveys to meet these new requirements. MRC also piloted a Youth Transition Service survey to consumers participating in 2015 Summer Internship programs and surveyed counselors on their knowledge of Pre—Employment Transition Services provided to students with disabilities by local education agencies. MRC has also added an Employer Satisfaction Survey to the Needs Assessment Process to address services to Employers.

B. who are minorities;

The need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Over the past ten years, MRC has seen an increase in African—American, Hispanic, and Asian consumers. Numerically, the largest growth is in Hispanic and African—American consumers. Proportionally, the largest growth in MRC's consumer population over the past decade has been among Asian and Hispanic consumers, which is consistent with the 2010 Census figures for Massachusetts. African—Americans are served by the MRC at a much higher rate than their rate in the overall population. Hispanic consumers are served by MRC at a rate consistent with their rate in the general population. It appears Asian/Pacific Islanders are slightly underserved in comparison with their rate in the overall state population (3.8% of MRC consumers compared to 6.1% for all MA population).

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

The MRC has identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being slightly underserved by the MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. It is important to note that proportionally Asians have been the fastest growing group amongst all ethnic and racial groups served by the MRC's VR program over the last 10 years. This is also true in the state's general population. It is recommended that the MRC continue its outreach efforts to Asian communities. MRC has translated key agency marketing and information materials and is also working on translating all MRCIS correspondence letters into several Asian languages common in Massachusetts including Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer as part of its Language Access Plan.

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

In order to meet the needs of individuals served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System, MRC continues its efforts to collaborate with other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities and to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment, and to continue to work closely together on WIOA implementation including common performance measures, and developing methods to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among others.

MRC will work in collaboration with other core partners under WIOA to survey and identify the needs of individuals working with other components of the system. Some of the identified needs include; interviewing skills, resume development, job specific skills (CVS pharmacy technician training, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program, Advance Auto Parts, Lowes, and Home Depot retail training). MRC will continue to consult with core partners on the identified needs of their consumers as it relates to accessibility and access to employment opportunities, employment training, and provide employer trainings on disability awareness and job accommodations.

The Commission VR Program has a presence at the Massachusetts career centers; the MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each Commission area director has a formal relationship with at least one career center. In addition, many area directors are on local workforce investment boards. Commission VR counseling staff make frequent visits and often conduct interviews at the local career centers.

The Commission's job placement specialists and other assigned Commission staff work closely with local career centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to make the career centers more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities including providing disability sensitivity training for career center staff.

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

Among individuals served by MRC with less than a high school education at application, 95% indicate that transition services to assist in transitioning from high school to college and employment and 87% find pre—employment transition services for students with disabilities as important service needs. Obtaining a HS Diploma and College Education were also rated as important services by youth. Results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a need for pre—employment transition services among high school students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need through its WIOA initiatives.

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

In terms of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community

Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority (79%) of MRC staff also are somewhat or very satisfied with CRP services. Improved communication and information flow between CRPs and MRC staff may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes. Recent vendor expansion efforts appear to have addressed CRP capacity needs, but there still appears to be additional capacity needed in certain geographic areas and for certain populations.

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

The Needs Assessment Report indicates that among transition—age youth served by MRC, 95% find transition services to assist in transitioning from high school to college and employment and 87% find pre—employment transition services for students with disabilities as important service needs. Obtaining a HS Diploma and College Education were also rated as important services by youth. Results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a need for pre—employment transition services among high school students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need through its WIOA initiatives.

MRC is working closely with local school districts on transition and WIOA pre—employment transition services, including those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth and have developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

k. Annual Estimates

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

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

In 2013, there were 6,613,654 individuals living in the community in Massachusetts, of which 782,204 were persons with disabilities; a prevalence rate of 11.8%. This is a projection based on available data. Please note that this is the most up to date information available as of when the State Plan was developed.

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

A. The VR Program;

It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under part B of Title I of the Act as follows. a. Individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility: 9,000 b. Individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs: 8,000 c. Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments: 7,150 d. Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments: 6,400

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide Supported Employment services with funds provided under part B of Title VI of the Act to 119 individuals.

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

MRC is not under an order of selection — Not applicable.

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

MRC is not under an order of selection — not applicable.

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

It is estimated that the costs of services with funds provided under part B of Title I of the Act, including Social Security Administration reimbursement, to be 64 million dollars.

MRC is not operating under an order of selection.

I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs. These have been identified based on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2014 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. The SRC has agreed to these goals.

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

Goal 1: Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Successfully Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit

Measurement: Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings Target: Establish baseline data over the next 2 program years Data Source: Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data Frequency: Annually

Goal 2: Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Successfully Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit Measurement: Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings Target: Establish baseline data over the next 2 program years Data Source: Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data Frequency: Annually

Goal 3: Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit Measurement: Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings Target: Establish baseline data over the next 2 program years. Data Source Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data Frequency: Annually

Goal 4: Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post—Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program Measurement: Number of MRC Consumers obtaining post—secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program. For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year Target: Establish baseline data for the first two program years Data Source: Level of Education Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 quarterly reporting Frequency: Annually

Goal 5: Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year Measurement: Number of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post—secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers receiving services through an IPE in the program year (Status 12—22) Target: Establish baseline data for the first two program years. Data Source: Level of Education Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 quarterly reporting Frequency: Annually

Goal 6: Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Measurement: Employment Retention Rate with the Same Employer at 2nd and 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data Target: Establish baseline data for the first two program years. Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Goal 7: Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for 90 Days or Greater to exceed last year's Program Year Outcome Measurement: Total Sum of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures) Target: 3,790 Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Goal 8: Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings Measurement: Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA—911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage, currently is \$10.00 in Massachusetts) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1). Target: At or above 53% Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Goal 9: Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post—secondary education. Measurement: Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year Target: At or above 120 or 2% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 1,440 or 14%. Data Source: Data from MRCIS Case Management System and EHS! Results Performance Management System Frequency: Monthly, Annually Goal 10: Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving pre—employment transition services from MRC. Measurement: Number of High School Student Consumers Served by MRC receiving Pre—Employment Transition Services (PETS) Target: 1,250* Data Source: Data from MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Monthly, Annually *MRC expects this number to grow going forward.

Goal 11: Maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers Measurement: Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30 Day Placements for the CIES Program. Target: Exceed 850 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes Data Source: MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Analysis Report Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Goal 12: Continue to Increase Employment Outcomes through MRC's Employment Service Specialists, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event. Measurement: Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of a MRC Employment Service Specialist in the current fiscal year, Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year, Total number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from Consumers Participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year. Target: Exceed 300 Successful Employment Outcomes for Employment Service Specialists, exceed 65 Successful Employment Outcomes for Consumers Participating in the Statewide Hiring Event, and exceed 300 Employment Outcomes from Employer Account Management System. Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, MRCIS Job Placement Module Frequency: Annually

Goal 13: Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage, Measurement: Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year. Target: Greater than 80% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18) Data Source: MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Analysis Report Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Goal 14: Maximize recruitment of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to address attrition from retirement through utilizing paid internships with Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate students. Measurement: Total number of internships provided to VR graduate students during the fiscal year, total number of former interns hired as VR counselors during the fiscal year. Target: Provide 10 or more internships annually, leading to 3 or more interns hired as QVRCs upon completion of their internship and degree program. Data Source: Intern Tracking Reports, Human Resource Data from Staffing Reports Frequency: Annually

Goal 15: Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Measurement: Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08. Target: Equal or greater to 100 Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Goal 16: Outreach to the Asian community through translation of key MRC documents and materials into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. Measurement: Completion of translation of key materials into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese Target: Completion of MRCIS Letter Translation into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese, posting on MRC's website by the end of the program year, and incorporation of letters directly into MRCIS system. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually

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

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2014 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in conjunction with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted its annual Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment (CSNA) in the Fall of 2014. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires the MRC to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment at least every three years, but the MRC administers it on an annual basis with the information and findings incorporated into the MRC's section of the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan, as well as in MRC's Strategic Planning, and Quality Assurance Activities.

The findings on consumer needs listed in this report are presented and shared with MRC Senior Management and VR staff, the entire body of the SRC, and other key stakeholders as part of the MRC's State Plan and continuous quality improvement processes. It is also publicly distributed via the MRC website. The CSNA process constituted a number of areas, including: a consumer survey; focus groups; analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts; findings from other reports and surveys including the Consumer, Provider, and Counselor Satisfaction surveys; pilot youth and employer surveys; and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders.

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

MRC included the new WIOA common performance accountability measures under Section 116 of WIOA in its goals and priorities. MRC will be establishing baseline data on these measures for the first two program years as specified in the final requirements for the WIOA Combined/Unified State Plan.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). SRC members through their area consumer advisory councils, SRC subcommittees, task forces, quarterly meetings, and the annual consumer conference, have conducted surveys and needs assessments that have provided input to more effectively address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency and the SRC used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction studies and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program and the agency's performance on the RSA Standards and Indicators in their development of the goals and priorities.

Additionally, finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 is also incorporated.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

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

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

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

B. The justification for the order.

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

C. The service and outcome goals.

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

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

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

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

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

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

MRC is not operating under an order of selection and does not anticipate that we will be operating under an order of selection in the next two years.

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

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

MRC's Title VI Part B funds will be distributed consistent with Title VI, Part B requirements with the notation that rates, fees, and expenditures are subject to applicable Commonwealth of Massachusetts statutory, regulatory, and related requirements governing purchases of services and goods. Such parameters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts govern, amongst other things, methods of procurement. Further, all providers of supported employment services need to qualify through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' inter—agency contractual process. The Commission and the Commonwealth utilizes procurement methods, which, to the maximum extent possible, facilitate the provision of services, and affords individuals meaningful choices among the entities (providers) that provide the services. MRC will establish the consumer need for this service on a fiscal year basis and will then fund services for those consumers in that specific geographic location. In FY'16 MRC has established the following need areas and funding levels. Area, Disability Type, Funding of Clients served: Greater Boston /South District MH TBI DD ASP LD/ADHD PD \$217,600, 55 consumers served

Western District MH TBI DD ASP LD/ADHD PD \$111,638, 28 consumers served

Northeast District TBI MH DD ASP LD/ADHD PD \$144,762, 36 consumers served

Statewide Total MH TBI DD ASP LD/ADHD PD \$474,000, 119 consumers served

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

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

MRC will use 50% of Title VI Supported Employment Funds youths with disabilities to provide supported employment services based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment. Services will be provided to assist youths with the most significant disabilities in choosing, obtaining, and maintaining competitive employment based on their interest, abilities, and skills. MRC will also make available Title VI funds for extended services for youths with the most significant disabilities to assist them in maintaining and advancing in competitive employment.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked with other human service agencies to identify and secure funding for extended supports for individuals in supported employment, including youth with the most significant disabilities. Funding for extended services is available from several sources contingent upon the consumer's disability, eligibility and the resources available to each state agency. This service delivery system is currently in place enabling state agencies to cost share the appropriate services needed for consumers to choose, find and maintain meaningful competitive supported employment. With the implementation of this initiative we have seen an increase in the availability of resources for extended services. However, the available funding is administered at local levels and each situation handled individually. Sources include: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (State Revenue) Department of Developmental Services Department of Mental Health MRC Statewide Head Injury Program Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Social Security Administration Work Incentives Private Sector Natural Supports

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote the collaboration with stake holders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of joint funded programs that have developed. Some examples of these collaborative programs are joint funding of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for individuals who are psychiatrically disabled between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries between the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

o. State's Strategies

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment during fiscal year 2015 to survey the rehabilitation

needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. Strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established consistent with the needs and trends to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs

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

MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through the VR program and with partners.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low—interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology.

Another program is the Easter Seals Program of Adaptive Assistance. For the purposes of this program adaptive assistance is defined to be devices, aids, and enhancements for the elimination of barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Adaptive assistance is defined as services that either 1) supplement or enhance functions of the individual or

2) that impact on the environment through environmental changes, e.g., workshop modifications. Rehabilitation technology specialists may prescribe both types of rehabilitation technology services in order to create and/or maximize employment opportunities for the individual with a disability. The rehabilitation technology services are provided to lead to and/or expand vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities.

Persons served under this program are applicants or clients of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Target population is individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom rehabilitation technology services are being considered as potentially eliminating barriers to vocational rehabilitation and/or enhancing vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities. Population includes:

1. Applicants undergoing evaluation of vocational rehabilitation potential, especially when the disabling condition of the individual is of such a nature and severity that rehabilitation technology services could result in a determination of ineligibility
2. Eligible vocational rehabilitation clients for whom rehabilitation technology is being considered to assist the client to attain intermediate objectives and long—range rehabilitation goals
3. Eligible employed individuals to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities for successful job performance.

Adaptive assistance evaluations, training, and consultations for individuals with disabilities served by the vocational rehabilitation program were:

1. Assessments of functional capacities of individuals with disabilities to include determinations of if and how the provision of rehabilitation technology services is likely to affect the capacity of the individual to perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment;
2. Recommendations of specific rehabilitation technology for individuals with disabilities to include descriptions of related barriers to be eliminated and descriptions of functional capacities to be attained;
3. Rehabilitation technology training to affect the capacity of the individual with a disability to utilize specific assistive technology devices (equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities) and thus perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment; and
4. Consultations to be provided to Commission staff to address the elimination of disability—related barriers, improvement of opportunities for competitive employment, and the development of functional capacities of individuals.

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

MRC has made a commitment to outreach to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are also ethnic and cultural minorities, especially to Asian communities who have been identified as under—served, by hiring bilingual staff to more effectively reach those communities and by the expectation that directors from local area offices are involved in outreach to local community agencies and organizations, especially those that serve ethnic and culturally minorities.

MRC also has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct, in collaboration with the Commission's staff development unit, training programs for local and district offices.

MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC recently completed a project to translate all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages which are spoken by MRC staff include: Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese. MRC will continue to explore with the SRC unserved/underserved committee ways of expanding MRC's efforts in this area.

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

receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

MRC has implemented strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities, including pre—employment transition services, through a new multi—million dollar procurement. Specific services are addressed in consumers’ individualized plan for employment based on their interests, choice, and needs. MRC closely coordinates pre—employment transition services with local educational agencies.

Through its MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MRC has established a working group to identify needs and best practices to improve and expand services for students with disabilities, including pre—employment transition services. This is incorporated as part of MRC’s strategic planning process.

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

Over the past several years, MRC and community rehabilitation providers have worked in partnership to develop a variety of programs and services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. These programs include: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) and many support services that are essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC and community providers collaborate in developing programs and services in such forums as: Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets twice a year; quarterly meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers; periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs, interagency and cross disability agency councils; task specific work teams and the Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment First (MAAPSE).

MRC Research and Development Department staff conducts training with agency managers from the VR and Supported Employment Programs at agency management conferences and at district and local area offices with unit supervisors on the standards and indicators and overall agency performance, what they mean, how they are derived from agency statistics and how they impact on agency performance. The Research and Development department also presents on standards and indicators and Needs Assessment results to new counseling staff as part of their initial training. The Commission also provides automated reports on line for managers for use to educate staff and develop strategies for correcting performance in these areas.

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

MRC has established an electronic reporting and performance measurement system to monitor, analyze, and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs. This system will allow the agency to make improvements to ensure performance on the WIOA common performance measures. MRC will be establishing baseline data on these measures for the first two program years and reporting data to RSA.

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

As a key partner in the statewide Workforce Investment system, MRC will continue to strengthen the alignment of the VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system. MRC subscribes to the overall vision for the Massachusetts Workforce Investment system as described below.

All Massachusetts residents, including individuals with disabilities, will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth's businesses' demands and sustains a thriving economy. To achieve this vision, Massachusetts will engage businesses to understand their needs and develop an integrated education and workforce system that supports career pathways to prepare residents with foundation, technical, professional skills and information and connections to postsecondary education and training. MRC will work with its core workforce partners to: 1. Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand 2. Improve foundation skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment 3. Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor-market driven credentialing, and employment 4. Meet the needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system (including partner programs)

The Commission VR Program has a presence at the Massachusetts career centers; the MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each Commission area director has a formal relationship with at least one career center. In addition, many area directors are on local workforce investment boards. Commission VR counseling staff make frequent visits and often conduct interviews at the local career center. MRC is strengthening its relationships with the WIBs and Career Centers as part of its WIOA efforts.

The Commission's job placement specialists and other assigned Commission staff work closely with local career centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to make the career centers more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities including providing disability sensitivity training for career center staff.

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment during fiscal year 2015 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. The strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established consistent with the needs and trends to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs. MRC will utilize the following strategies to achieve each of its stated goals and priorities, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment:

1. MRC will provide outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities which includes staff outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public by contact and presentation by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, printed brochures, and agency consumer conferences.

2. The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers through its Statewide Employment Services office as well as through its local Area Offices' forty four (44) community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health especially through its clubhouse programs.

3. MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through the VR program and with partners. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. MRC has identified how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process; and has described how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of statewide assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission funds programs to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Needs include:

1. Marketing Initiative

2. On the job training and on the job evaluations

3. IT web—based MRCIS and Hardware Initiative

4. Transportation: MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC publishes transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other transportation options for consumers.

5. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs.

6. Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: Based on public comments regarding innovative employment programs, MRC will research best practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in

Massachusetts. MRC will find out more about the suggested models including: the practices of North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, and Wyoming, which have achieved increased results of 50% employment rates of individuals with disabilities; Innovative youth employment models from Georgia, Nevada, Kentucky; and the RespectAbility Disability Employment First Planning Tool, among others.

7. CareerAccess Initiative: MRC will closely follow the CareerAccess initiative. CareerAccess is a community—driven proposed program to reform the current Social Security Administration’s Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) rules so that young adults with disabilities can work and achieve their full potential without risking losing their disability benefits. If the proposal is adopted by the Social Security Administration, MRC will help its consumers take full advantage of the program as part of their individual plans for employment.

8. Adaptive Van Driver Evaluation and Training

9. Re—allotment funded Workforce Investment with Employment Service Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

10. Summer Work Based Learning Experience

11. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships.

12. Vocational Testing—Job Matching Occupational Specific Web—Based Training Initiative

13. Job—Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: At a local level, MRC is proposing that the state agencies, and their programs, and community based organizations who are working on placing people into jobs work together. Essentially, it is a public workforce system without walls. In this model, referrals are made to specific places, i.e. people with disabilities are referred to MRC. If MRC has a training program or relationship with a particular employer, they become the gatekeeper for that referral. If MRC is unable to fill the training program slots, then it is opened up to other people who can be referred from the Career Center, CBO’s or other programs. The Gatekeeper function is a review of the person to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements to enter the training program. Information about what slots are opened, what the requirements are for various training programs and the status of referrals will need to get worked out with each area.

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

MRC strategies to overcome barriers relating to access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program include the following:

1. Outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. Commission activities include outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public

institutions, and the general public by contact and presentation by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, printed brochures and agency consumer conferences.

2. The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers through its Statewide Employment Services office as well as through its local Area Offices' forty four (44) community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health especially through its clubhouse programs.

3. MRC has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct, in collaboration with the Commission's staff development unit, training programs for local and district offices.

4. MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC recently completed a project to translate all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages which are spoken by MRC staff including Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese.

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

Describe:

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs for the previous Federal Fiscal Year. These goals were identified based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2013 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, these goals are based upon agency performance on the RSA Standards and Indicators (using the FFY 2013 data set that was recently submitted to RSA), recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. This is a report on progress on these goals based on FFY2014 and FFY2015 outcomes.

Goal 1: Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for 90 Days or Greater to exceed last year's federal fiscal year outcome as stated in RSA Standard and Indicator 1.1

Measurement: Total Sum of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Federal Fiscal Year (Status 26 Closures) Target: 3,744 Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Goal 1, of Employment Outcomes: FFY2014: Goal: 3,651 Outcome: 3,744 Variance: +93 FFY2015: Goal: 3,745 Outcome: 3,790 Variance: +45

In FFY2014, MRC met its annual Successful Employment Outcome goal for the Federal Fiscal Year and passed RSA Standard and Indicator 1.1 by achieving 3,744 employment outcomes. For FFY2015, MRC successfully achieved 3,790 Successful Employment Outcomes, exceeding its goal of 3,745 successful closures required to pass RSA Standard and Indicator 1.1 by a variance of 45. This marked the sixth straight Federal Fiscal year that MRC improved upon its previous year results in terms of successful employment outcomes.

Goal 2: Increase the Rehabilitation Rate of MRC Consumers receiving Services so that the Ratio of Successful Closures versus Unsuccessful Closures (Rehabilitation Rate) exceeds the RSA Standard of 55.8% as stated in RSA Standard and Indicator 1.2

Measurement: Total Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Federal Fiscal Year (Status 26 Closures) divided by the sum of both total successful employment outcomes (Status 26 Closures) and the total number of unsuccessful closures after receiving services (Status 28 Closures for the Current Federal Fiscal Year Target: Equal to or Greater than 55.8% Standard Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data and Status 28 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Rehabilitation Rate

FFY2014: Goal: 55.8%. Actual: 59.81% Variance: +4.01% FFY2015: Goal: 55.8% Actual: 49.03% Variance: —6.77%

In FFY2014, MRC successfully exceeded its goal for the Rehabilitation Rate (the ratio of successful versus unsuccessful closures) by a variance of 4.01%, achieving a ratio of 58.91% and passing RSA Standard and Indicator 1.2. For FFY2015, MRC achieved a 49.03% Rehabilitation Rate, falling short of the 55.8% goal by a variance of 6.77%. Despite this, MRC passed the overall Federal Standards and Indicators for FFY2015 by achieving 4 of 6 overall indicators, and 2 of 4 primary indicators based on preliminary FFY2015 data. MRC continues to focus on successful Status 26 closures and to determine ways of reducing Status 28 closures.

Goal 3: Focus on Competitive, Integrated Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers by Maximizing the Proportion of MRC Consumers Exiting the VR Program with Competitive or Self Employment with earnings at or above Minimum Wage (RSA Standard and Indicator 1.3)

Measurement: Total Number of Successful Status 26 Closures with a RSA—911 Employment Status Code of 1, 3, 4, or 7 in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage, currently is \$8.00 in Massachusetts). Target: Equal to or Greater than 97% Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: % of Consumers Exiting with Competitive/Self Employment at/above Minimum Wage

FFY2014: Goal: 97% Actual: 96.9% Variance: —0.1% FFY2015: Goal: 97% Actual: 98.4% Variance: +1.4%

In FFY2014, MRC was close to its State Plan goal for the percentage of consumers exiting the VR program with competitive/self—employment at/above the Minimum Wage, achieving an outcome of 96.9%, and passing the RSA Standard and Indicator 1.4 Standard of 72.6%. For FFY2015, MRC had achieved a 98.4% outcome in this area and has achieved its FFY2015 goal and exceeded the RSA Standard in this area. Note that the only closures which do not meet this criteria are Homemaker and Unpaid Family Worker Status 26 closures. All MRC closures in competitive and self—employment were at or above minimum wage. Those closed as homemakers or unpaid family workers are done so based on consumer choice. MRC does not place consumers into sub—minimum wage employment. Performance under this standard has remained steady over the past four years. MRC will be phasing out homemaker closures as a result of the enactment of WIOA and language in proposed draft regulations.

Goal 4: Focus on serving individuals with significant disabilities by Maximizing the Proportion of MRC Consumers with Significant Disabilities who Exit the VR Program with Competitive or Self Employment with earnings at or above Minimum Wage (RSA Standard and Indicator 1.3)

Measurement: Total Number of Successful Status 26 Closures for individuals with a Significant Disability or Most Significant Disability code at closure and with a RSA—911 Employment Status Code of 1, 3, 4, or 7 in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage) Target: Equal to or Greater than 90% Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: % of Consumers with Significant Disabilities Exiting with Competitive/Self Employment at/above Minimum Wage

FFY2014: Goal: 90% Actual: 99.6% Variance: +9.6% FFY2015: Goal: 90% Actual: 99.2% Variance: +9.2%

In FFY2014, MRC successfully exceeded its State Plan goal for % of consumers with significant disabilities exiting the VR program with competitive/self—employment at/above the Minimum Wage by 9.6%, achieving an outcome of 99.6%, and passing the RSA Standard and Indicator 1.4 standard of 62.4%. For FFY2015, MRC achieved a 99.2% outcome in this area, exceeding its goal by 9.2%. The vast majority of MRC consumers are individuals with significant disabilities.

Goal 5: Improve Quality of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC consumers by increasing the average hourly wage of employed consumers and the ratio of the MRC consumer hourly wage to the state average hourly wage (RSA Standard and Indicator 1.5)

Measurement: Average Hourly Wage for Status 26 Closures for individuals with a RSA—911 Employment Status Code of 1, 3, 4, or 7 in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage), Average Hourly Wage divided by Fiscal Year State Weekly Wage Data from Bureau of Labor Statistics calculated using methodology as specified in RSA instructions for calculating VR agency performance on Standard and Indicator 1.5 Target: An average hourly wage for MRC consumers at or above the level required to meet Standard and Indicator 1.5 (\$15.43 for FFY2013); Positive increase in Average Hourly Wage for employed consumers from prior fiscal year Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Bureau of Labor Statistics Weekly Wage Data Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Average Hourly Wage Compared to Prior Fiscal Year FFY2014: Actual: \$12.69 Variance: —\$0.05 FFY2015: Actual: \$12.94 Variance: +\$0.25

Evaluation of Progress: Ratio of Consumer Hourly Wage to State Average Hourly Wage
FFY2014: Goal: .52 Actual: .416 Variance: —.104 FFY2015: Goal: .52. Actual: .408 Variance: —.112

In FFY2014, MRC's average consumer wage remained fairly flat compared to performance in FFY2013 and MRC fell short of its goal for the ratio of the average consumer hourly wage to the state average hourly wage. For FFY2015, MRC's average hourly wage was up 25 cents from FFY2014 and MRC successfully met its stated goal through this increase. The ratio of the consumer hourly wage to the state average hourly wage remains steady. It must be noted that MRC's performance on the wage ratio is significantly impacted by the fact that Massachusetts is a high per capita wage state (average wage of \$31.09 per hour based on the most recent BLS wage data), and the average consumer wage for consumers in FFY2015 to date is \$12.94— up slightly from FFY2014. In order to pass this Indicator, given the current level of wages in the state, consumers would need to earn an average of about \$15.90/hour. Performance is also impacted by the fact that MRC serves many consumers who have no or limited work histories, limiting the range of jobs that they may be qualified for. Additionally, some may not be able to work full time due to their needs. Despite these challenges, MRC has seen recent improvements in the average hourly wages for employed consumers. For the most recently completed Federal Fiscal year, the average hourly wage (based on SFY) was the highest since FY2007.

Goal 6: Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings as Defined in RSA Standard and Indicator 1.6.

Measurement: Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA—911 Employment Status Code of 1, 3, 4, or 7 in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage, currently is \$8.00 in Massachusetts) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target: At or above 53% Standard Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Consumers Exiting Program with earnings as Primary Source of Support\ FFY2014: Goal: 53% Actual: 59.3% Variance +6.3% FFY2015: Goal: 53% Actual: 59.1% Variance: +6.1%

In FFY2014, MRC successfully exceeded its target for the proportion of consumers successfully achieving employment and exiting the VR program with personal earnings as their primary source of support compared to their primary source of support at application for VR services by 6.3%. MRC also passed RSA Standard and Indicator 1.5 in this area. In FFY2015, MRC achieved a 59.1% outcome in this area as results remained steady from FFY2014. This allowed MRC both achieve and exceed its goal for consumers exiting the VR program with income earnings as their primary source of support.

Goal 7: Continue to Provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Consumers from Diverse Ethnic and Racial Backgrounds as defined in RSA Standard and Indicator 2.1

Measurement: The service rate for consumers of minority backgrounds divided by the service rate for non—minority consumers (Service rates calculated using methodology as specified in RSA instructions for calculating VR agency performance on Standard and Indicator 2.1) Target: Ratio at or above 80% Standard Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Services Provided to Consumers from Diverse Ethnic and Racial Backgrounds

FFY2014: Goal: 0.9 Actual: 0.936 Variance: +0.036 FFY2015: Goal: 0.9 Actual: 0.945 Variance: +0.045

In FFY2014, MRC successfully exceeded its target for the ratio of the service rate for consumers from minority backgrounds to the service rate for non—minority consumers. MRC also passed RSA Standard and Indicator 2.1 in this area. In FFY2015, MRC achieved a 0.945 outcome in this area, exceeding its goal for FFY2015. MRC serves a diverse group of consumers that is generally representative of the state population as a whole as indicated by performance in this area.

Goal 8: Maximize the Number and Percentage of MRC Consumers of Transition Age (Defined as Age 16—24 at Application as per RSA 107 Monitoring Tables) completing education and training programs, including post—secondary education.

Measurement: Number and Percent of MRC Consumers of Transition Age 16—24 at Application Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year Target: At or above 120 or 2% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 1,200 or 12%. Data Source: Data from MRCIS Case Management System and EHS! Results Performance Management System Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Consumers of Transition Age Completing Education and Training Programs FFY2014: Goal: 1,200/12% Actual: 1,671/18% FFY2015: Goal: 1,200/12% Actual: 1,703/16.9%

In FFY2014, MRC successfully exceeded its targets for both the number and percent of consumers of transition age (age 16 to 24 at application) completing training and education programs. Serving transition—age consumers effectively is a priority of MRC. In FFY2015, MRC successfully achieved its FFY2015 goals for outcomes in this area with 1,703 young consumers aged 16 to 24 completing training or education programs, representing 16.9% of all served youth aged 16 to 24 at application.

Goal 9: Maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers

Measurement: Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30—Day Placements for the CIES Program. Target: Exceed 825 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes Data Source: MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Analysis Report Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services Program (CIES) Fiscal Year: of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes FY2014: Goal: 825 Actual: 766 Variance: —59 FY2015: Goal: 825 Actual: 899 Variance: +74

% of CIES Placements Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes FY2014: Goal: 75% Actual: 81% Variance: +6% FY2015: Goal: 75% Actual: 77.4% Variance: +2.4%

Through its Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers, MRC achieved both state plan targets under this goal in FY2015 by achieving 899 Successful Employment Outcomes through CIES, exceeding the goal by 74, and achieving a 77.4% rate of successful employment outcomes for consumers placed through CIES. This was a 17% increase from FY2014. In FY2014, MRC fell short of its employment outcome goal but exceeded its 90 day employment retention goal for CIES placements.

Goal 10: Continue to Increase Employment Outcomes through MRC's Employment Service Specialists, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event.

Measurement: Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of a MRC Employment Service Specialist in the current fiscal year, Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year, Total number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from Consumers Participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year. Target: Exceed 250 Successful Employment Outcomes for Employment Service Specialists, exceed 60 Successful Employment Outcomes for Consumers Participating in the Statewide Hiring Event, total number of Employment Outcomes from Employer Account Management System. Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Job Placement Database Frequency: Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes through MRC's Employer Engagement Efforts (Employment Service Specialists, Account Management System, Annual Hiring Event)

FY2014: ESS Outcomes: Goal: 250 Actual: 296 FY2015: ESS Outcomes: Goal: 250 Actual: 424

FY2014: Hiring Event Outcomes: Goal: 60 Actual: 135 FY2015: Hiring Event Outcomes: Goal: 60 Actual: 94

Total number of Employment Outcomes from MRC Employer Account Management System (Statewide Accounts): MRC continues to focus on reaching out to employers and develop partnerships designed to lead to competitive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This is tied into the emphasis of employer engagement under WIOA. MRC's Employment Service Specialists in coordination with the Job Placement Specialists continue to

outreach to employers especially to those in high growth industries. Incorporation of the Employment Service Specialists into the VR process has been instrumental in assisting the division in exceeding its state and federal employment in difficult economic times. In FY2014, Employment Specialists contributed 296 successful employment outcomes and in FY2015, they contributed 424 employment outcomes to the annual overall employment outcome, exceeding the goal by 174 or 59%.

MRC operated its 3rd Annual Statewide Hiring Event during FY2015 in partnership with the US Office of Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) with Federal Contractors, leading to 89 hires and 64 Successful employment outcomes to date.

Finally, MRC continues to expand its employer account management system. This system is operated by MRC's Employment Specialists and Placement Specialists in multiple labor market sectors to develop and maintain partnerships with employers to routinely hire and retain MRC consumers for available positions. The number of successful employment outcomes with statewide employer accounts increased from 334 to 388 in FY2015.

Goal 11: Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage Measurement: Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year. Target: Greater than 80% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18) Data Source: MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Analysis Report Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes and/or Enrollment in Training and Education as a result of MRC's Donated Vehicle Program

FFY2014: Goal: 80% Actual: 96% Variance: +16% FFY2015: Goal: 80% Actual: 100% Variance: +20%

In FFY2014 and FFY2015, MRC successfully met its state plan targets under this goal as 96% and 100% of consumers participating in MRC's Donated Vehicle Program respectively achieved a successful employment outcomes or enrolled in training and education programs, exceeding the goal of 80% by 16% for FFY2014 and 20% for FFY2015.

Goal 12: Maximize recruitment of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to address attrition from retirement through utilizing paid internships with Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate students.

Measurement: Total number of internships provided to VR graduate students during the fiscal year, total number of former interns hired as VR counselors during the fiscal year. Target: Provide 10 or more internships annually, leading to 3 or more interns hired as QVRCs upon completion of their internship and degree program. Data Source: Intern Tracking Reports, Human Resource Data from Staffing Reports Frequency: Annually Evaluation of Progress: Workforce Recruitment through Paid Internships for VR Counseling Graduate Students FFY2014: 12 internships provided, 6 hired FFY2015: 10 internships provided, 5 hired

MRC operated an ongoing paid internship program for students enrolled in VR Counseling degree programs, to provide VR college students with paid, real world experience and to serve as an avenue to recruit qualified individuals for VR counseling positions upon their graduation from VR counseling programs. Since 2008, 84 Internships have been provided, and 40 former interns have been hired by MRC as VR counselors. This is a significant benefit to MRC as it helps provide a successful solution to offsetting the impact of staff retirements. MRC met its goal in FFY2014 and FFY2015 by providing at least 10 VR college internships annually with 6 former interns hired as counselors in FFY2014 and 5 in FFY2015.

Goal 13: Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Measurement: Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08. Target: Equal or greater to 75 Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Quarterly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Autism Fiscal Year: of Employment Outcomes for Individuals with FFY2014: Goal: 75 Actual: 185 Variance: +110 FFY2015: Goal: 213 Actual: 75 Variance +138

In FFY2014, MRC met its goal for Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers identified in the MRCIS Case Management System as having Autism as a primary or secondary disability by achieving 185 employment outcomes for these consumers, exceeding the goal by 110. For FFY2015, MRC successfully achieved 213 Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers with Autism, exceeding its annual goal by a variance of 138, as successful employment outcomes for this disability group continued to increase.

Goal 14: Outreach to the Asian community through translation of key MRC documents and materials into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. Measurement: Completion of translation of key materials into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese Target: Completion of Translation and Posting on MRC's website by the end of the fiscal year. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Outreach to the Asian Community FY2014: During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, MRC continued to make progress towards outreach to the Asian community through the translation of key agency informational materials into Khmer, Vietnamese, and Traditional Chinese. These have been made publicly available through MRC's website.

FY2015: During Federal Fiscal Year 2015, MRC completed a project to translate all client correspondence letters from the MRCIS web—based case management system into seven commonly used foreign languages in Massachusetts, including Khmer, Vietnamese, and Traditional Chinese (Mandarin). This will help to enhance services and accessibility to consumers in the Asian community. The letters have been posted to MRC's intranet for counselors to use and will be directly incorporated into MRCIS in the next system release.

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

The following is an evaluation of the extent to which the MRC program goals described in the previously approved VR services portion of the Unified State Plan for the most recently completed federal fiscal years 2014 and 2015, were not achieved.

MRC achieved all of its goals and priorities as stated in the previous approved state plan (FFY2015) in at least one of the two years except for one goal, Standard and Indicator 1.5 (The ratio of consumer wage to overall state wage)

MRC historically does not pass this indicator because of the fact that Massachusetts has a very high state average wage. Due to the fact that MRC serves many consumers who have no or limited work histories, and may not be able to work full time due to their needs, it continues to be difficult to change this pattern. However, MRC can improve its performance in this area by ensuring that wages are accurately coded in the MRCIS system, focusing on employment outcomes in high growth industries, and through initiatives such as the Employer Account Management System, the Federal Contractor Hiring Event and the CVS Pharmacy Technician Training Program. MRC has continued to integrate greater amounts of information on labor market conditions and employment desired by consumers into our decision making. These continued efforts will assist towards improved performance in this area.

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

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

Supported Employment Program FY2015 Goal Achievement:

Referrals: Goal: 228, Actual: 264

Applicants: Goal: 224, Actual: 185

Acceptances: Goal: 232, Actual: 162

IPEs: Goal: 188, Actual: 153

Employment Outcomes: Goal: 88, Actual: 94 Significant Disability Employment Outcomes: Goal: 88, Actual: 94 Served: Goal: 400, Actual: 518

MRC achieved most of its goals for the Supported Employment Program from the previous FFY2015 approved VR State Plan. This was in spite of staffing challenges due to retirements and staff turnover. In particular, there was an increase in the number of consumers successfully employed consumers and the number of consumers served through MRC's Supported Employment Program.

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

MRC did not achieve some of its supported employment goals related to the number of applicants, acceptances, and IPEs developed during FY2015.

MRC has many employees who are reaching retirement age and who will be approaching retirement age within the next five to 10 years as the average age in the Commission is 50 with over 20 years of agency experience. At this time, MRC is able to back fill vacant staff positions and use post retirement staff and interns to cover caseloads. This has also impacted the Supported Employment Program. MRC will be evaluating these approaches as part of an updated workforce plan in 2016.

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

The following is a summary of MRC achievement on the RSA Standards and Indicators. MRC is establishing baseline data for the WIOA common performance measures for the next two years as allowable under the state plan requirements and will report this data to RSA.

Standard and Indicator 1.1: Rehabilitation Outcomes Actual: 3,744 Standard: 3,651 Result: PASS

MRC had an excellent year in terms of successful employment outcomes made possible by the combined hard work and effort of its counselors, job placement specialists, employment service specialists, and other staff. As a result, MRC was able to continue to improve performance and increase the number of successful rehabilitations achieved in FY 2014.

Standard and Indicator 1.2: Rehabilitation Rate Actual: 59.8% Standard: 55.8% Result: PASS

MRC's Rehabilitation Rate increased from FFY2013 and marked the second straight year this Indicator was passed. MRC will continue to monitor and evaluate Status 28 closures and focus on Status 26 closures on an ongoing basis to maintain and improve our level of performance.

Standard and Indicator 1.3: Individuals with Disabilities in Competitive Employment above Minimum Wage

Actual: 96.9% Standard: 72.6% Result: PASS

MRC continues to pass this indicator as the agency continues its focus on employment of consumers with significant disabilities in competitive, integrated employment. The only closures which do not meet this criteria are Homemaker and Unpaid Family Worker Status 26 closures, and all MRC closures in competitive and self—employment were at or above minimum wage. Those closed as homemakers or unpaid family workers are done so based on consumer choice. MRC does not place consumers into sub—minimum wage employment.

Standard and Indicator 1.4: Rate of individuals w/ Significant Disabilities of all Individuals in Competitive Employment above Minimum Wage

Actual: 99.6% Standard: 62.4% Result: PASS

The overwhelming majority of MRC consumers continue to be those with significant and the most significant disabilities. MRC continues to focus on placing consumers with significant disabilities into competitive employment in jobs at or above the minimum wage based on their needs, interests, preferences, and choices.

Standard and Indicator 1.5: Ratio of consumer wage to state wage (Primary)

Actual: .42 Standard: .52 Result: FAIL

MRC historically does not pass this indicator because of the fact that Massachusetts has a very high state average wage. Due to the fact that MRC serves many consumers who have no or limited work histories, and may not be able to work full time due to their needs, it continues to be difficult to change this pattern. However, MRC can improve its performance in this area by ensuring that wages are accurately coded in the MRCIS system, focusing on employment outcomes in high growth industries, and through initiatives such as the Employer Account

Management System, the Federal Contractor Hiring Event and the CVS Pharmacy Technician Training Program. MRC has continued to integrate greater amounts of information on labor market conditions and employment desired by consumers into our decision making. These continued efforts will assist towards improved performance in this area.

Standard and Indicator 1.6: Personal Earnings as Primary Source of Support

Actual: 59.4% Standard: 53% Result: PASS

MRC passed this indicator again in FY 2014. Much effort has gone into assuring the accurate coding of the primary source of income of employed consumers both in and without the presence of other income such as SSA or other public benefits. MRC will continue to train staff in this area and validations have been added to the MRCIS case management system to avoid potential coding errors.

Standard and Indicator 2.1: Ratio of minorities served to non—minorities Actual: .94 Standard: .80 Result: PASS

MRC passed this indicator with a high score. MRC continues to make a strong commitment to achieve equality in service delivery. MRC counselors should be commended for their good work in dealing with the challenges and needs associated with diversity, and keeping it a priority.

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission utilized a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Activities for innovation and expansion include:

1. Marketing Initiative
2. On the job training and on the job evaluations
3. IT web—based MRCIS and Hardware Initiative
4. Transportation: MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC publishes transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other transportation options for consumers.
5. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs.
6. Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: Based on public comments regarding innovative employment programs, MRC will research best

practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts. MRC will find out more about the suggested models including: the practices of North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, and Wyoming, which have achieved increased results of 50% employment rates of individuals with disabilities; Innovative youth employment models from Georgia, Nevada, Kentucky; and the RespectAbility Disability Employment First Planning Tool, among others.

7. CareerAccess Initiative: MRC will closely follow the CareerAccess initiative. CareerAccess is a community—driven proposed program to reform the current Social Security Administration’s Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) rules so that young adults with disabilities can work and achieve their full potential without risking losing their disability benefits. If the proposal is adopted by the Social Security Administration, MRC will help its consumers take full advantage of the program as part of their individual plans for employment.

8. Adaptive Van Driver Evaluation and Training

9. Re—allotment funded Workforce Investment with Employment Service Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

10. Summer Work Based Learning Experience

11. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships.

12. Vocational Testing—Job Matching Occupational Specific Web—Based Training Initiative

13. Job—Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: At a local level, MRC is proposing that the state agencies, and their programs, and community based organizations who are working on placing people into jobs work together. Essentially, it is a public workforce system without walls. In this model, referrals are made to specific places, i.e. people with disabilities are referred to MRC. If MRC has a training program or relationship with a particular employer, they become the gatekeeper for that referral. If MRC is unable to fill the training program slots, then it is opened up to other people who can be referred from the Career Center, CBO’s or other programs. The Gatekeeper function is a review of the person to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements to enter the training program. Information about what slots are opened, what the requirements are for various training programs and the status of referrals will need to get worked out with each area.

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

Include the following:

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

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts through its Human Services agencies and its secondary school special education programs, has been developing and expanding integrated work

opportunities for individuals with disabilities, since 1978 because it became very evident that there was a vast number of people with disabilities for whom there were limited work options because of the nature and extent of support services they require in order to maintain employment. With the leadership of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Massachusetts human service agencies began to examine ways in which integrated work opportunities could be extended to persons with the most significant disabilities including youth who need extensive support services to remain in the work setting as productive employees. Throughout the years, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Commission for the Blind and the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing have been working together to shift and to share resources to create opportunities. The Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services have shifted programs and funding to develop and expand long—term support services at integrated work sites. Through its provider contracts, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission set goals for conversion of sheltered work to supported employment and has worked with providers to develop more substantive support services that are long term and based on consumers' choices.

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services with the assistance of the Statewide Employment Services Department at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation commission organized a group “Strategic Alliances” whose plans included the development of a comprehensive employment system that would:

1. Increase the number of people with disabilities engaged in appropriate employment services.
2. Create a consistent definition and support services structure regardless of the agency through which the service is provided
3. Establish a contracting process and reimbursement mechanism for employment services, which would be guided by the same rules, regulations and guidelines regardless of the administering agency, and based on client choice.
4. Permit the evaluation of funding strategies for employment services through tracking, gap identification and service and budget advocacy.

There continues to be a very positive climate for the enhancement of this process in both the Administrative and Legislative branches of State government.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has clearly come to understand this great void in employment opportunities for many individuals with the most significant disabilities and has made a firm commitment to fill this void. Title VI, B funded programs and services represent a crucial component in the Commonwealth's overall plan for supported employment. As several State agencies develop long—term, State funded supported employment services and programs; the Title IV B program is instrumental in bridging the gap between unemployment or under employment to competitive employment with long—term support services for several persons with disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has over 60 Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers to offer Supported Employment services. These programs, located throughout the state, serve persons with an array of severe disabilities including autism, deaf/severely hearing impaired, severely physically disabled, long—term mentally ill, traumatic brain injured and dual

diagnosed persons with intellectual disabilities and long—term mental illness and multiply disabled individuals.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Due to the vigorous emphasis on supported employment in Massachusetts, which has been spearheaded by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, has resulted in funding for long—term support services. This will allow the Commission to continue the following goals: 1. Strengthen existing quality programs and replace ineffective/inefficient programs with new ones. Seventy providers have qualified to date.

2. Focus Title VI B funding on under—served or un—served consumers such as those who are severely physically disabled, Asperger’s Syndrome, Deaf, or Brain Injured. Establish a large statewide pool of programs interested in and able to provide Supported Employment Programs and services, including long—term supports .

All Title VI B program participants who were enrolled in the supported employment program completed not more than 18 months of services funded by Title VI. All necessary long—term support services have been arranged to continue without use of Title I or Title VI B funding. Funding for extended long—term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the client’s disability and the resources available to each service provider agency. Sources include:

1. IRS Section 44
2. United Cerebral Palsy Funding
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Private Sector Business Natural Supports
6. Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
7. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
8. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Revenue
9. Social Security Work Incentives
10. Natural Supports

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Name of designated State agency **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Adelaide Nicky Osborne**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

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

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

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

Certification 2 Footnotes

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

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

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

Certification 3 Footnotes

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

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

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

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

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

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

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

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

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

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

Applicant's Organization **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Adelaide Osborne**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

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

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

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment

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

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

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the

undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

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

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

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

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

Applicant's Organization **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Adelaide Osborne**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

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

Assurances

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

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .**
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.**
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:

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

- a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .**
- c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?**

Agency will provide the full range of services described above

- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.**
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

- i. has developed and will implement,**
 - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and**
 - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and**
- ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).**

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

a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

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

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

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

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

b. The designated State agency assures that:

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

Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State: