

DVRS Directors Report
Qtr. 1 7/1/2024 – 9/30/2024

Transition services and collaboration efforts with DDD and DOE:

- In the prior quarter, DVRS and DDD began work to transform the F3 form as a first step to streamline the consumer experience when working with both agencies. In this quarter, DVRS and DDD leadership continued to expand the work of improving processes. The first step was to move the work of mapping the consumer experience and procedures across both agencies to identify the areas of inefficiency. DDD invited DVRS to begin meeting with the State Employment Leadership Network technical assistance team to work through approaches to engage staff as we look to improve the way our agencies work together at every level.
- DVRS and DDD began to seek additional opportunities for joint staff development to improve service delivery. In this quarter, we began considering potential upcoming offerings by the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON). NEON is in the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).
- DVRS collaborates with DDD, DOE, CBVI, SPAN, and CIL on the NJ CIT grant from RSA, which is a 5-year grant to improve transition services leading to competitive integrated employment. DVRS meets monthly with DOE, DDD and CBVI to discuss interagency updates and services while addressing all interagency concerns. The Community of Practice (CoP) has been created and monthly meetings are scheduled.
- DVRS has increased the vendor billable hourly rates for Pre-Placement (PP), Time-Limited Coaching (TLC), Supported Employment Intensive Job Coaching (SEIJC), Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Pre-ETS Centers for Independent Living, and Out of School Youth Employment Services (OSYES). All rates were effective 8/1/2024. The increase is \$ 81 and \$95 for ASL.

Pre-ETS Data

FFY25 Pre-ETS Contracts

- The contracts for the Pre-ETS FFY25 have been fully executed and encumbered. These contracts will be in place from 10/1/2024 through 9/30/2025.

FFY24 10/01/2023 – 09/30/2024

Name of Office	# of PE Referrals FY 24	# of PE Applicants FY 24	# of Open Cases in PE	# of Closed Cases in PE FY 24	# of PE Closed Transferred to VR Open FY 24
Bridgeton	234	109	95	14	11
Cherry Hill	288	176	120	56	25
Elizabeth	112	85	59	26	21
Hackensack	366	194	133	61	25
Jersey City	219	211	160	51	23
Neptune	193	237	133	104	27
New Brunswick	123	122	38	84	48
Newark	391	336	216	120	33
Paterson	57	35	19	16	12
Phillipsburg	104	121	82	39	30
Pleasantville	12	30	9	21	6
Randolph	150	72	59	13	6
Rio Grande	1	8	0	8	2
Sewell	69	46	33	13	5
Somerville	106	196	60	136	39
Toms River	141	243	97	146	42
Trenton	153	174	128	46	16
Westampton	85	72	54	18	6
Total	2804	2467	1495	972	377

Customized Employment Training

- The customized employment training was approved to move forward during the SRC meeting on September 18, 2024. Subsequently, DVRS met with the Rehabilitation Services Administration and formally submitted the request for final approval.

Monitoring, Assessment and Planning

- Monitoring - The rehabilitation services administration monitored the division for vocational rehabilitation services in January 2024. We will be receiving a monitoring report from RSA. During this reporting quarter we participated in check-in meetings with RSA to prepare to respond to the upcoming report and to develop and submit both a corrective action plan and a strategic plan. As indicated in the prior report, we continue our ongoing review of data and assessment of operational procedures.
- NJDVRS received technical assistance from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management and for Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment to begin to address concerns that were

identified during the monitoring visit. We continued this work during this quarter and outlined all of the specific services provided below:

The VRTAC-QM assisted DVRS by offering services under the quality management team. The team:

- Assisted the agency in RSA-911 quarterly report to meet performance accountability requirements;
- Assisted the agency in developing strategies for data analysis and data-informed decision-making utilizing various analytics tools such as Aware layouts/reports, Tableau, RSA Data Dashboard, and Excel with a focus on Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gains;
- Assisted leadership in the development of quality assurance initiatives and case file review process;
- Provided staff training on primary indicators of performance, data validation, sanctions and negotiations, performance data requirements of the WIOA Performance Accountability System; and
- Reviewed, developed, and/or revised, as needed, policies and procedures for Period of Performance

The VRTAC-QM also assisted DVRS by offering services under the fiscal team. The team:

- Reviewed and analyzed the agency's fiscal management and operations to assist leadership in continuous improvement of grant management;
- Conducted training regarding Period of Performance, Fiscal Basics, Field Fiscal Basics, Uniform Grant Guidance, EDGAR, Federal Reporting and Contract Management; and
- Provided technical assistance and training to develop the agency's capacity to correctly manage period of performance.

The VRTAC-QE assisted DVRS by offering customized support services. The team:

- Developed and delivered a comprehensive training curriculum to address the agency's concerns related to outreach for subgroups that have been underserved. The VRTAC -QE provided agency wide training related to outreach for Latinx and Hispanic communities as well as Black/African American communities;
- Engaged in regular work sessions with the Business Outreach Team to strategize, discuss progress and receive feedback related to employer engagement and connecting consumers with employers; and
- Met with agency staff and provided tools and guidance related to customized employment.

- In the prior quarter, DVRS Leadership implemented field office visits in this reporting period to review. These visits consisted of review of each local office as well as in-depth discussions. In this quarter DVRS leadership concluded the field office visits and began planning for the administrative unit office visits. The unit visits will focus on business outreach team, community rehabilitation programs unit, programs unit, contract administration and MIS. All of the visits will inform and support ongoing strategic planning.

Quality Assurance Unit Development and Next Steps

- The QA Unit is working on process improvements and innovation in the areas of consumer satisfaction surveys, streamlining and enhancing reporting and data analysis with the field and other agency units, as well as constructing a draft of the case review form and process. The QA Unit collaborates closely with IT and Field, driving the Aware data coding issues project and continues to participate with federal consult and guidance through VR-TAC.

Staffing Update - To be provided separately

CIE Pilot Program – July work through September

- The competitive integrated employment pilot program is a two-year pilot running from June 2024-July 2026 with a clear mission to improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Seven vendors have been awarded the grant based on their comprehensive holistic service models. These vendors are equipped to deliver robust training, credentialing, and wrap-around services that empower individuals with disabilities to access competitive integrated employment. Through industry specific credentials, such as serv safe and food handler certifications, along with paid internship opportunities, participants gain practical skills and real work experience, positioning them strongly for the workforce. Beyond employment training, supports include benefits counseling, transportation assistance, and other services focus on ensuring that participants have resources needed to achieve sustainable employment. The staff within the programs also receive advanced training (e.g. Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) and Boggs certifications), which support delivering high-quality support to participants. To make the program visible and impactful, ongoing technical assistance and oversight will be provided to vendors, along with monthly check-ins. Vendors provide quarterly reports detailing progress, outcomes, and obstacles and in partnership with Rutgers Heldrich Center, the Office of Employment Accessibility Services is conducting an ongoing evaluation.

DVRS Staffing Report

September 13, 2024 through November 12, 2024

Current Approved Positions, in process of hiring:

Field Staff:

- 4 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors 1 (VRC)
- 6 VRC-1 bilingual variants
- 1 VRC-1 DLS variant
- 15 VRC-2 Positions for Promotions from VRC-1
- 1 Supervising VRC, Newark.
- 7 Clerks
- 1 Sr. Clerk
- 3 Principal Clerks
- 4 Head Clerks
- 22 Rehabilitation Aides

Administrative Office:

- Director
- 4 Program, Planning and Development Specialists
- 2 Analyst Trainee Positions
- 1 Senior Technician, Information Systems
- 2 Program Specialist 1 Positions

New Employees Hired: (September 12 through October 1, **Month of October
Hiring Stats are pending and will be added to next meeting update**

- 1 Secretarial Assistant 2, Central Office
- 1 Bilingual VRC 1.