

## **OVERVIEW**

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) is holding teleconferences to obtain input for the development of the Federal Fiscal Year 2014 update to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services and to hear comments on a variety of issues affecting individuals who are blind. Comments received at the teleconferences and in writing will be reviewed and incorporated into the State Plan as appropriate.

The Federal Rehabilitation Act provides funding for states to implement vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. The purpose of these programs is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment opportunities and achieve economic self-sufficiency and independence with the goal of full inclusion and integration into society. CBVH is the agency designated in New York State to provide vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services to individuals who are legally blind. In order to receive funding under the Rehabilitation Act for vocational rehabilitation services, CBVH must submit a State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) as well as annual updates to the plan.

## **THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT STATE PLAN**

The update to the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services consists of several attachments that provide narrative information about CBVH activities in certain areas. It is expected that the final State Plan submittal will include the following attachments:

- 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Work Force Investment System
- 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials
- 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations
- 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment
- 4.11(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Service

- 4.11(c)(1) State's Goals and Priorities
- 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
- 4.11(d) State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities
- 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title 1 Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

## **SUMMARY OF ATTACHMENTS**

### Attachment 4.8(b)(1) – Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not In the Statewide Workforce Investment System and With Other Entities

This attachment describes the variety of entities that CBVH works closely with to enhance vocational rehabilitation services and placement opportunities for CBVH consumers.

### Attachment 4.8(b)(2) – Coordination with Education Officials

This attachment describes CBVH's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to vocational rehabilitation services.

### Attachment 4.8(b)(3) - Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

This attachment describes the various contracts and agreements CBVH has with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

### Attachment 4.10 – Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

This attachment describes CBVH's system of personnel development to enable CBVH to maintain an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals to provide vocational rehabilitation services.

### Attachment 4.11(a) – Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs

This attachment describes methods CBVH uses to determine the vocational rehabilitation service needs of individuals who are legally blind. This attachment includes information about the needs assessment currently being conducted.

#### Attachment 4.11(b) – Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services

This attachment provides updated information regarding the estimate of the number of individuals expected to be served using vocational rehabilitation funds and supported employment funds during the next fiscal year and the cost of those services.

#### Attachment 4.11(c)(1) - State's Goals and Priorities

This attachment identifies CBVH's goals and priorities for the coming year.

#### Attachment 4.11(c)(4) – Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VII, Part B, Funds

This attachment provides information regarding the use of supported employment funds and the supported employment services provided by CBVH.

#### Attachment 4.11(d) – State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

This attachment identifies the strategies to be employed to enable CBVH to achieve the goals and priorities in the State Plan.

#### Attachment 4.11(e)(2) – Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities.

This attachment describes the progress CBVH has made towards achieving the goals and priorities described in the FY2012 State Plan.

#### Proposed Policy Changes

##### Trial Work Experience/Extended Evaluation

CBVH will be revising the extended evaluation and trial work experience policy to reflect recommendations made by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) during the 2012 monitoring review. The policy will clarify that if the counselor has concerns about an applicant's ability to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome and is unable to make a determination that the applicant is eligible for services, trial work experiences will be arranged to gather information before making a final determination of eligibility/ineligibility. The purpose of the trial work experience is to gather information about whether the applicant can benefit from services with the appropriate supports. The policy will also be clarified to explain that if the counselor remains unable to make a determination of eligibility after trial work experiences have been completed, an extended evaluation will be pursued to gather additional information to make an eligibility decision.

Extended evaluation will also be pursued when the applicant is unable to participate in a trial work experience when additional assessment information is needed to make an eligibility determination.

### Services to be Provided During the Assessment Phase of the VR Process

In response to the findings in the RSA review, CBVH will be revising the list of available services to be provided to consumers prior to the development of an IPE. In accordance with federal regulations, prior to developing an IPE, an assessment to determine the eligible individual's employment outcome and the nature and scope of services to be included in the IPE is conducted. . For some eligible individuals, particularly transition age students, this process can take some time. For other eligible individuals, an IPE can be developed soon after the determination of eligibility without the need for extensive assessments/evaluation. Services during this time are limited to assessment and evaluations to aid in the development of the IPE. These services had been provided to consumers in accordance with an IPE Development Plan (IPEDP). Also in accordance with RSA findings, the IPEDP form is being revised and renamed.