

Service Area Plan

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

The Vocational Rehabilitation Service Area provides vocational rehabilitation and residential services for individuals with multiple and complex disabilities at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), a division of the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS).

Service Area Alignment to Mission

This service area directly aligns with WWRC's mission to provide people with disabilities comprehensive, individualized services to realize optimal personal independence and employment.

Service Area Statutory Authority

Federal statutory authorities governing this service area include:

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, reauthorized in 1998 under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act (Public Law 105-220), requires linkages with One-Stop Centers and establishes State VR programs as mandatory partners under WIA. Establishes State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and all territories, and identifies the scope and mandatory requirements governing all State VR Programs. Mandates, as part of the required state plan, an assessment of school-to-work transition services provided through the VR system and specifies how those services are to be coordinated with those under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, as amended.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) reauthorized both the Adult Basic Education Skills Act, which governs state programs for adult education, and the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which provides services to help individuals with

disabilities become employable and achieve full integration into society. WIA provides workforce investment services and programs through statewide and local One-Stop Career Center systems. The goals are to provide (1) enhanced employment, retention, and earnings of individuals, (2) increased occupational skills attainment, and (3) improved national economic growth through increased productivity and competitiveness.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-446) reauthorizes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. School-to-work transition services, under the provisions of the 2004 law, are now required at the age of sixteen for students and will include academic and functional goals. The goals shall be based on age-appropriate assessments and include independent living skills, if appropriate. IDEIA aligns closely to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), helping to ensure equity, accountability and excellence in education for children with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336) recognizes and protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. The ADA covers a wide range of disabilities, from physical conditions affecting mobility, stamina, sight, hearing, and speech to conditions such as emotional illness and learning disorders. The ADA addresses access to the workplace (Title I), State and local government services (Title II), and places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III).

State mandates and regulatory authorities governing this service area include:

Title 23, Chapter 3 of the Code of Virginia classifies WWRC as an educational institution.

Title 51.5, Chapters 3-5, Code of Virginia designates DRS, along with the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, as the state agency responsible for carrying out the provisions and purposes of the federal Rehabilitation Act. Also establishes the DRS Commissioner, or designee, with authority to operate and maintain the WWRC as a comprehensive rehabilitation service provider.

The Commonwealth of Virginia Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities, Sections 8 VAC 20-80-40; 8 VAC 20-80-160; and, 8 VAC 20-80-190 requires WWRC, as a Division of DRS, to conform to federal and state special education laws and regulations and Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It requires that WWRC establish policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state special education laws and regulations, including a mandate that qualified children with disabilities who meet WWRC admissions criteria through the age of 21 years, inclusive, have the right to a free, appropriate public education.

Service Area Customer Base

Customer (s)	Served	Potential
Vocational Rehabilitation Service Area Clients	1,146	1,146

Anticipated Changes to Service Area Customer Base

DRS’ vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is a major partner of WWRC and the primary referral source of consumers to WWRC. The number of consumers that DRS served in Fiscal Year 2005 declined, leading to a 33% reduction in clients at WWRC. The reason for the decline in number of DRS clients served was implementation of order of selection, a legal requirement that occurs when the VR program has insufficient funds to serve all eligible clients. In Fiscal Year 2006, DRS began addressing the waiting list of consumers needing VR services. More consumers being served by DRS’ VR program should lead to increased referrals to WWRC.

WWRC has positioned itself to respond to a growing demand for school-to-work transition services for youth with disabilities through two distinct, yet interrelated initiatives that will be more aggressively marketed as a “continuum of service” package for school-aged youth with disabilities who are either still enrolled in the public secondary education system between the ages of 18-22 or those who may have “dropped out” prior to completion. The “continuum of transition services” will include: (1) expansion and growth of the highly effective Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program, collaboratively administered over the past twenty years by the Virginia Departments of Education and Rehabilitative

Services through an interagency Management Team and operated from WWRC; and (2) implementation of a recently re-designed Life Skills Program targeting the development of pre-employment behaviors, as well as social, interpersonal, and independent living skills for the targeted population. This re-designed Life Skills Program incorporates a holistic approach to assist clients in reaching their employment and independent living goals. WWRC intends to pilot the re-designed Life Skills Program in Fiscal Year 2006 and anticipates an increase in the numbers of clients served during the next biennium. The redesigned Life Skills program will replace the existing Pre-Vocational Training and Independent Living Skills Programs provided to approximately 170 adult vocational rehabilitation clients.

Community-based partners, coupled with the use of video-teleconferencing and other remote technologies for distance learning and remote services, WWRC is anticipated to increase Vocational Services targeting a non-VR customer base. Two federally funded grant initiatives, implemented over the last biennium, provide a foundation for the building of such services for a non-VR customer base, within available capacity and resources.

Partners

STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES: WWRC partners with State and Federal agencies, local Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Career Centers, local public school divisions, two and four year colleges and universities, other comprehensive rehabilitation centers and community-based service organizations serving individuals with disabilities on client referrals, service coordination, joint grant initiatives and/or program development, and potential shared funding streams.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, EMPLOYERS, TRADE ORGANIZATIONS: WWRC partners with business and industry, employers, trade organizations, Committees and Councils on consultation and technical guidance for WWRC training programs and curricula; student certification requirements; shared instruction and/or internship opportunities; and access to employment opportunities for qualified graduates.

FAMILIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITHH DISABILITIES: Critical partnerships with families of individuals with disabilities lead to recruitment of potential WWRC clients; potential (co)sponsorship to cover the cost of

WWRC services; and community-based support for successful community re-entry.

Service Area Products and Service

Vocational rehabilitation services include vocational assessment; career planning and exploration; school-to-work transition assessment, monitoring, and follow-up services; work behavior strengthening and work adjustment training; occupation-specific training; trade-related academic, literacy, GED assessment and instruction critical to workplace readiness and preparation; independent living skills assessment and training; specialized services for individuals with brain injury; rehabilitation counseling services and coordination with medical and behavioral service provision. These services may be provided on site at WWRC, in a community based setting or at an employment site. An integrated approach to simultaneous provision of these services, along with individualized employment and independent living goals, are the transition services that will improve outcomes for both DRS and public secondary education clients.

The Center's residential services are an essential component of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Residential services provide clients with room and board, recreational therapy, independent living skills experiences, and social skill development. Community re-entry services provide local community support that enhances the success of meeting employment and independent living goals of clients. A recent emphasis on campus security provides a safe and secure living and learning environment.

Factors Impacting Service Area Product and Services

There is an increased demand for school-to-work transition services for youth with disabilities, especially configured with pre and post program community integration and support services. The Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program, currently in 87% of all school divisions statewide, has experienced increased demand within participating sites as well as received requests for services from several non-participating sites. According to Virginia Department of Education data for the most recent year in which statistics are available (December 1, 2004), there are a documented 2,574 students with disabilities aged 19-22 still enrolled in the public secondary education system; of these, the disability groups most represented include (in descending order): Mental Retardation (MR); Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD); Emotional Disturbance (ED); Multiple Disabilities; and Autism. The report of children with disabilities exiting

special education documents that 1,593 students “dropped out” prior to completion, with 84% of these (N=1,337) prior to the age of 18. Those classified as ED, MR, and SLD were more likely to drop-out than other disability groups.

Over the past ten years, and increasingly over the past five years, WWRC has seen a significant increase in clients served with more complex and multiple disabilities, combined with depressed basic reading and math literacy skills (on average below the 4th grade level) that impact the individual’s general problem-solving and other cognitive abilities, thus having a major impact on the rehabilitation process leading towards successful employment and independent living outcomes. This leads to programming implications for WWRC’s Vocational Services Area.

There are increased campus security needs due to changing needs and characteristics of clients.

Demands by business and industry for skills certification, including, technical, workplace literacy and demonstrated social/interpersonal/communication skills that meet baseline expectations and standards, require constant realignment of service objectives and restructured programs – an issue exacerbated by changing needs and characteristics of clients served at WWRC.

The rapidly changing workplace, increasingly sophisticated technology standards and targeted state and national emphasis on accountability leads to more refined and focused program objectives that emphasize measurable skill attainment.

Effective management of resources is required to balance the demands for on-site, facility-based and mobile, community-based, or remote services.

Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services

An increase in the numbers of persons served annually will result from increased DRS referrals and successful realignment of programs to better meet the demands of our federal, state, local and community partners.

Increasing challenges facing people with disabilities, coupled with rapidly changing workforce demands, technology standards and expectations of business and industry will require increased flexibility and responsiveness of

WWRC's vocational services. While WWRC has adjusted use of available resources to meet these demands, any increase in clients served will acquire additional resources. Initiatives for attracting new referral sources and additional special and federal funds will satisfy some of this need.

An increase in "hands-on", experiential programming, staffing and structure to address an ever-increasing changing residential population profile will allow WWRC to pilot and establish programs that best meet the needs of persons served.

Increased numbers of students will be required to pass certification exams that demonstrate competency in technical skills and proficiency in basic workplace literacy skills to become and remain competitively employed.

Expansion and use of tele-videoconferencing equipment and other technologies, including distance education course offerings within WWRC's training programs, will increase WWRC's role in community based services, modernize training curricula, create partnership opportunities with community colleges and universities and enhance the ability to remove learning barriers created by a number of disabling conditions. As an example, Project HEAR, a WWRC, community college and federal partnership, is piloting the use of technologies and shared resources "across systems" to provide remote tutoring and interpreter services for community college students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The need to identify additional funding, including funding from non-traditional partners, to support growth will result in increased marketing efforts and creative use of resources and partnerships. The recent success of Project TRAIN IT, a partnership between WWRC, seven local Workforce Investment Boards and DRS is proof of concept. This unique blend of services has produced highly skilled technology workers with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 2005, TRAIN IT began its transition to full program status, using blended public, private, and corporate resources.

The PERT program is at a crossroads in terms of the identification of an expanded funding base to meet its current and projected growth patterns and in terms of programmatic and staffing pattern changes required to more effectively serve a changing population profile. The recently re-designed Life Skills Program is partially staffed and funded using existing WWRC resources as the Pre-Vocational Training and Independent Living Skills

Programs, but in order to expand services to a potential secondary school population will require the allocation of additional fiscal and personnel resources.

Partnerships with a consortium of comprehensive rehabilitation centers offer opportunities to facilitate shared client services and staff education across Centers via tele-videoconferencing.

Service Area Financial Summary

The Vocational Rehabilitation Service Area is 21.9% general funds and 78.1% non-general funds. Of the non-general funds, \$7.64 million is special funds provided for federal vocational rehabilitation services by DRS, reimbursement from insurance for medical diagnostic services rendered to clients as a part of their vocational assessment programs, rental of quarters to clients, their families and student affiliate staff and curriculum projects. An additional \$164,949 of non-general funds is federal funds from the PELL student aid program, the Department of Education, the National School Food Program and several grants for promoting safe driving for aging drivers and remote interpretation services for the deaf and hard of hearing.

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Funds	Nongeneral Funds	General Funds	Nongeneral Funds
Base Budget	\$1,968,332	\$7,372,864	\$1,968,332	\$7,372,864
Changes to Base	\$1,059,440	\$370,298	\$1,059,440	\$370,298
SERVICE AREA TOTAL	\$3,027,772	\$7,743,162	\$3,027,772	\$7,743,162

Service Area Human Resources Summary

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Area is staffed with 112.2 full-time and part-time salaried positions, wage positions and contract personnel. The service area is faced with a significant loss of personnel due to the aging workforce. Thirteen percent (13%) of current classified employees may retire within 5 years with unreduced benefits. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of the classified employees in the Vocational Rehabilitation Division are currently eligible to retire with reduced benefits.

Service Area Work Force Breakdown

Effective Date	5/1/2005
Total Authorized Position Level	148
Vacant Positions	15.5
Non-Classified (Filled)	0
Full-Time Classified (Filled)	102
Part-Time Classified (Filled)	3.2
Faculty	0
Wage	0
Contract Employees	7
Total Human Resource Level	112.2

Factors Impacting Service Area Human Resource

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for special education teachers is expected to increase by thirty percent in the next seven years and demand for counselors is expected to increase by approximately twenty-five percent.

Currently, WWRC experiences difficulty in recruiting employees due to competition with local school systems, especially when we are recruiting for individuals to work 12 months versus 9 month contracts offered by local school divisions.

The personnel standard that WWRC must use to comply with the qualified personnel requirement of the Rehabilitation Act is the educational requirements of the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) Guide (Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related field) or the actual CRC or Certified Vocational Evaluator (CVE). This requirement makes it very difficult to recruit VR counselors and evaluators because they must meet this standard in order to be considered for a position. The higher education institutions are not producing sufficient numbers of graduates with these qualifications who want to work in the public VR program to meet the demand, particularly in the rural areas.

Anticipated Changes To Service Area Human Resources

A Workforce Planning initiative will address the loss of institutional knowledge from employee retirements and reduce the impact on the operation of critical agency functions as follows:

- Hiring former employees (retirees) in wage positions to train and mentor new employees and current employees who are changing job functions

- Identify and cross train employees on critical functions of the agency,
- Succession planning,
- A student internship program with various colleges and universities, and
- Expanded use of telecommuting, alternate work schedules, and flexible work hours to attract and retain staff.

Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

Objective 45404.01

To prepare WWRC training graduates to attain competitive employment outcomes.

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This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

Deliver comprehensive and effective vocational services to citizens of the Commonwealth with disabilities that will realize their optimal independence and employability.

This Objective Has The Following Measures:

Measure 45404.01.01

WWRC will work to ensure that 80% of graduates of its training programs are employed. This is a key measure.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Quarterly

Measure Baseline: 70%

Measure Target: 80%

Data Source and Calculation:

Percentage of graduates from WWRC training programs (able to be contacted) who are competitively employed at one year. WWRC training program client follow-up phone calls and database define who is employed after one year. The number of graduates employed divided by the number of graduates contacted provides a percentage of graduates from WWRC training programs who are counted as competitively employed at one year. The baseline is 70% of graduates able to be contacted who are competitively

employed, based on average of four-years of follow-up activity.

Objective 45404.01.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- Improve evaluation and training programs to better serve our clients.
- Routinely review client outcomes for program improvements.
- Incorporate distance learning initiatives into the Employment and Occupational Skills Training Programs.
- Increase use of assistive and remote technologies to support student acquisition of employment skills.
- Develop a continuum of transition services for WWRC clients.

Objective 45404.02.02

To expand and integrate portions of the Prevocational and Independent Living programs into a redesigned Life Skills Program

To expand and integrate portions of the Prevocational and Independent Living programs into a redesigned Life Skills Program that will provide skills assessment and experiential training in pre-employment behaviors, and, social, interpersonal, and independent living skills, primarily targeting youth aged 18-22 identified as special education students. The Life Skills Program would replace the Prevocational and Independent Living programs currently offered to 170 adult vocational rehabilitation clients.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

Deliver comprehensive and effective vocational services to citizens of the Commonwealth with disabilities that will realize their optimal independence and employability.

This Objective Has The Following Measures:

Measure 5404.02.02

Number of Students Served in Life Skills

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: 170 (average Fiscal Year 2004-2005 for persons served in Pre-Vocational Training and Independent Livings Skills Training Program prior to redesign)

Measure Target: 170

Measure Data Source and Calculation

Number of students fully enrolled students in the Life Skills Program. WWRC maintains a data base of clients served and the services that they receive. A report of clients enrolled will provide this measure.

Objective 45404.02.02 Has The Following Strategies

- Development of a Life Skills Program through the efforts of an inter-departmental staff team at WWRC, consumers and referral sources to meet the needs of the growing population of students being referred to the Center requiring pre-employment and independent living skills as well as vocational rehabilitation.
- Refine the Life Skills Program through implementation of a pilot program with the reallocation of existing resources for Fiscal Year 2006 for 20 clients.
- Begin full implementation and marketing of the Life Skills Program.

Objective 45404.03.03:

To expand the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program.

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This Objective Supports The Following Agency Goals:

Deliver comprehensive and effective vocational services to citizens of the Commonwealth with disabilities that will realize their optimal independence and employability.

This Objective Has The Following Measures:

Measure 45404.03.03

Number of PERT Students Served

Measure Type: Output

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: 449 students served (Fiscal Year 2005 actual)

Measure Target: 450

Measure Data source and Calculation

Number of persons served through the PERT Program. WWRC maintains a data base of clients served and the services that they receive. A report of clients enrolled will provide this measure.

Measure 45404.04.04

Percentage of Local School Divisions Participating in the PERT Program

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Quarterly

Measure Baseline: 85% of school divisions participating in Fiscal Year 2005

Measure Target: 90%

Measure Data Source and Calculation

Number of agreements with local school divisions throughout the Commonwealth.

This Objective Has The Following Strategies

- Identify sources of increased PERT funding to a level that would support 720 total PERT students served annually, effective the 2006-2007 school year.
- Reassign available slots per local school division in accordance with completed reallocation plan by June 30, 2006.

- Revise annual PERT calendars for 2006-2008 school years to reflect assigned slots per local school division, effective the 2006-2007 school year, and 100% of local school divisions scheduled for annual intakes, no later than the 2007-2008 school year.
- An interagency PERT Management Team will expand PERT service offerings to include all public school divisions in Virginia. Without additional funding, this expansion will require a decrease in total number of persons served at WWRC due to increased costs resulting from disability-related needs and functional limitations of youth served.
- Continue to monitor and track PERT utilization by local school division and adjust resources, as needed, reflective of trends and patterns.