

VR and Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center Evaluators

Issue: The VACPID project uncovered a need for vocational evaluators to “catch-up” with the fast advancement of technology within high tech fields and understanding how workforce credentials impact career pathway options.

Vocational Evaluators are integral to career pathways strategies for clients, as their work involves assessing the needs, skills, and interests of individuals that help them determine career options. Vocational evaluators are often the first individuals to discuss careers, labor market demand and training options with VR Candidates. They share information not only with candidates but also with counselors, families and support networks. Virginia’s CPID project also uncovered a disconnect between the field and WWRC evaluation services. Students interested in attending WWRC for training had to attend another vocational evaluation at the Center before they received approval to attend. With a wait list for WWRC vocational evaluation of several months, this duplication affected all WWRC trainings.

CPID response: The CPID Vocational Evaluation specialist collaborated with both the WWRC and DARS’ field evaluators to discuss career pathways, and share resources. As the program expanded, VEs from both the field and WWRC reviewed Career Pathways skill sheets, examined assessment techniques, shared resources, trained together and built an ongoing supportive network.

Quarterly calls for evaluators to discuss the needs of WWRC and Field: At the beginning of the CPID grant, the trade evaluators at WWRC worked closely with the Manufacturing Technician Training program to develop a clear understanding of the skill sets necessary for success within the program. To better align field and WWRC services, the CPID Team and evaluators developed quarterly calls. These calls included updates on WWRC and field services, included a review of documents and other resources, and then deposited on a shared drive for use by evaluators.

- **Outreach to Evaluators:** To increase their understanding of CP and to have their help in the referral of candidates all evaluators were invited to attend tours of business, informational sessions, academies, lunch and learns and training overviews.
- **Manufacturing Association Workforce Symposium:** Evaluators from both the field and WWRC were invited to attend the *Manufacturing Association Workforce Symposium* held at the University of Lynchburg in August 2019. The Symposium provided an

opportunity to learn directly from businesses, their preferred industry recognized credentials and to discuss the value of including IWD in their diverse talent pipeline. Topics included: MTM assessment method, Virginia Career Explorer, Career Pathways for Disadvantaged Youth, as well as Cyber Innovations. The evaluators hosted a table on vocational evaluation and assessments.

- **Full-day Evaluation Training:** In Aug 2019, a full-day training for field vocational evaluators and select counselors and managers examined the role that Vocational Evaluators have within the VR process including Career Pathways. Discussion included working with Academies to jump start the career pathway discussion; bottlenecks in the evaluation process and opportunities for growth; aligning resources to better ensure consistent evaluations in CPID fields across the state; and review of partnerships in the community to enhance and braid services for assessments. Dr. Victor Gray (Director of MA's Manufacturing Skills Institute) provided a presentation on Lean principles as they apply to service oriented occupations.
- **Lean Accessibility Program (LAP):** Evaluators were invited to participate in the Lean Accessibility Program training with the Virginia Manufacturers Association in September, 2020. This train the trainer option examined the LAP assessment tool that looks at assistive technology and lean manufacturing. Attendees were encouraged to contact Dr. Victor Gray with questions and he was willing to participate in a LAP assessment with participants.
- **Ongoing Training in Assessment Options, online and in person:** Due to COVID-19, all evaluators faced issues related to assessment in the virtual environment. Quarterly calls increased to weekly calls for support and discussion of resources. Training related to virtual tools were provided to all evaluators on new online assessments, use of Zoom and tips and tricks for use of the google drives. Training included Virtual Job Shadow; CAPS/COPS/COPES assessments; Careerscope; Woodcock Academic Achievement; CASAS achievement; Northstar Digital Literacy; VOCFIT and Career Index Plus.
- **Career Exploration: Train the Trainer for Academies:** The VACPID Team provided a train the trainer for one and two-day cyber security curriculum in Northern Virginia. Working with an evaluator and an Employment Support Services Senior a curriculum entitled Cyber Security Academy was developed. This started with 18 students, 3 from DBVI and 15 from DARS.

Sustainability:

1. Quarterly Calls: Evaluators are continuing the quarterly calls to collaborate, problem solve and provide resources for each other.
2. Kate Kaegi, CPID VE Specialist will continue working with DARS evaluators in her new role following the CPID grant.
3. Kate Kaegi will be partnering with Kentucky's Helga Gilbert to include their evaluators in quarterly calls. This will begin in January of 2021.

Future Research: Use of Vocational Evaluation within career pathways as method to increase career options for IWD.

Resources:

PPT's

- Vocational Assessment Student Driven Choice to Career Pathways
- Assessment as a Business Engagement Strategy
- Threading the Pre-ETS Career Exploration Needle
- Vocational Assessments and Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities

Documents:

- Advanced Manufacturing Assessment Skill Sheet

Webinar:

- [Vocational Assessment and Career Pathways](#)

The content of this document was developed under Virginia's Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant (#H235N150008) from the Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government.

For additional information, contact: kate.kaegi@dars.virginia.gov

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