

# Montana Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan

Effective FY 2009

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Mount Helena—Photo by Sue Anderson

PROMOTING WORK AND  
INDEPENDENCE FOR  
MONTANANS WITH  
DISABILITIES

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**Attachment 4.2 (c)**

**Summary of Input and Recommendation of the State  
Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit;  
and Explanation for Rejection of Input or Recommendations**

*The Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Council advises and works with the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to improve policies, programs, delivery of services to consumers, and methods for reaching potential consumers and employers.*

The Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Council (Council) provides input and advice to Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act. The Council holds meetings at least quarterly. These meetings are accessible and open to the public and are held in various locations statewide. The Council has three standing committees—Transitions, Public Awareness and Native American. Policy and program issues are discussed at both the Council meetings and the committee meetings. Council members are invited and do participate with the MVR management staff to help develop the strategic plan and determine the agency's priorities.

The following is a summary of specific input and recommendations from the Council.

**1. Invite Ellen Swaney, from the Commissioner of Higher Education's Office, to participate in a panel discussion before the full Council. Other panel participants would be Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and MVR. Topics for discussion would include, but not be limited to: standardization of eligibility requirements for disability support services within Higher Education; OPI's Performance Summary; update on Reauthorization of the Act (if available); and overview of the interagency agreement Joe Mathews has negotiated with Higher Education.**

**MVR Response:** MVR staff attempted to contact Ellen Swaney to seek her participation on this panel. Ellen was unable to schedule. MVR will continue to attempt to schedule with Ellen. The Council indicates that this would still be of interest to them.

**2. Create an array of methods, through professional development of MVR Counselors, to help them more effectively relate MVR services to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Consider joint training with partners such as Parents Lets Unite for Kids (PLUK), OPE, Higher Education, PetNetWest, etc.**

**MVR Response:** The MVR transitions coordinator attended the Council for Exceptional Children Conference in Missoula on the 4, 5, and 6 of April. She was an exhibitor, providing attendees with information about VR services. It is recommended that MVR be an exhibitor at this conference annually. MVR has and will continue to provide training to counselors related to the services available through partnering entities. We have had in-service training provided by PLUK, OPI, and Mary Morrison, but recognize the need for ongoing collaboration.

**3. Develop a 121 Fact Sheet with information that includes eligibility and service area guidelines for the six 121 Projects. Ensure that all MVR counselors receive a copy once completed.**

**MVR Response:** This was completed, reviewed by all six 121 projects, and sent to MVR counselors on 3/19/08.

**4. MVR's policy/ procedures for deciding if MVR pays for a consumer's master's degree needs to be clarified.**

**MVR Response:** The chief of field services has met several times with representatives of MVR, the Montana Advocacy Program and MVR Advisory Council members to work on specific language to clarify the decision process and criteria used by the MVR agency in the determination of how a consumer will qualify for support in Masters level training. The negotiations have resulted in draft procedural language and a training protocol for counselors. Counselor training will be conducted in the next years Bi District/All Staff training cycle.

*The policy reads as follows:*

When a person chooses a goal requiring graduate studies, that person may qualify for supports from MVR when:

1. The chosen rehabilitation goal, consistent with the persons strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice requires the degree; and
2. The individual is expected to experience significant impediments in;
  - A. training; or

- B. securing, retaining, or regaining employment; and
3. The individual's impediments will require accommodations at such a level as to make specialized credentials a necessary service, to assure the individual can complete successfully for the employment outcome.

Other required MVR services may continue while the client is participating in graduate school until the employment goal has been met. Financial need, cost, or duration of services shall not be the sole basis for determining a need for graduate level support.

A counselor's commitment to a program of education supports for an IPE containing an employment goal requiring graduate work shall be based on an individualized assessment. The assessment shall be conducted at the time of the consumers request for graduate study supports, or at a time mutually agreeable to the consumer and counselor. The conclusions of the individualized assessment regarding the need of services while the person completes graduate studies shall be reviewed by the counselor's supervisor and the review documented in the case file prior to signing the IPE or its' amendment.

A person who can prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment without significant impediment in a professional field consistent with the persons strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice is not eligible for graduate supports.

#### **4. Develop a Public Relations (PR) strategy for television and radios spots.**

**MVR Response:** This is ongoing. To date, a member of the MVR Council PR committee has met with the Butte MVR office to discuss the 60 second and 30 second Public Service Announcements that will be produced.

#### **5. Develop a PR strategy for recognizing businesses that employ individuals with disabilities.**

**MVR Response:** Five businesses will be presented with an award this year for their commitment to hiring individuals with disabilities. A template for the press release has been drafted by the MVR Council PR committee.

## **6. Provide cultural sensitivity training to the MVR Council**

**MVR Response:** Maynard Kicking Women provided cultural training at the MVR Council meeting that was held on the Blackfeet Reservation in July 2007.

At the October 2007 Council meeting Mavis Young Bear, Fort Belknap Section 121 director (Native American Vocational Rehabilitation) showed a video that she helped produce in North Dakota. The video explained the rehabilitation process for consumers in the Section 121 project.

## **7. Respond to the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) request to adopt a resolution supporting the organization.**

**MVR Response:** After discussing the resolution, the Montana VR Council decided not to adopt the resolution. Concerns included not knowing if the organization would be adversarial towards VR agencies (MVR has an excellent relationship with the Council), the newness of the organization, not knowing what the financial commitment would entail, and the uncertainty of where the organization would head.

## **8. Recommend that the Council draft a statement of support for the future of the VR program to be presented at the All Staff meeting.**

**MVR Response:** This was completed. Dick Trerise, MVR Council Chair, presented at the All Staff meeting in Polson, MT on 4/15/08.

## **9. Develop a public relations plan to reach students with disabilities, parents, school staff, and community agencies on transition services**

**MVR Response:** MVR continues to work to improve its transitions services to youth with disabilities. In July of 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MVR and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) calling for continued collaboration between these two entities on behalf of transitioning youth. MVR continues to maintain a "contact list" between the school system and MVR offices, which is readily available on our website. Every high school in Montana is assigned an MVR counselor liaison. MVR will again have staff attend all days of the Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) this year, in addition to sponsoring delegates. MVR participates in a number of groups dedicated to the advancement of

"transitions" services and is an active member of the Governor's Transitions Council.

MVR has created a transitions counselor position in the Missoula Region. This counselor schedules office hours at the high schools and is available to offer consultation to special education and 504 coordinators, teachers, school administration, parents, advocacy groups and others regarding the role of MVR in transition. The MVR transition counselor will meet with staff and other interested parties in other school districts to share best practices and facilitate communication between parties.

**10. Support the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG), which will provide extended health care coverage to employed consumers.**

**MVR Response:** The state was awarded a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant in January 2006. This grant funds activities to determine the feasibility of starting a Medicaid Buy-In program in Montana and sets up the mechanism to implement the program. Medicaid Buy In allows workers with disabilities to pay a monthly premium for Medicaid Insurance.

Grant activities in the past year include:

- Contracted with Health and Disability Advocates for 8 Social Security Work Incentives Workshops in Montana. Workshops were held in Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Kalispell, Billings, Miles City, Fort Peck and Havre with over 200 participants
- Contracted with Allen Jensen, George Washington University Medical School, for a cost/benefit analysis of a Montana Medicaid Buy In.
- Developed a Native American survey with Mavis Young Bear, Fort Belknap, and Dr. Nate St Pierre, Rocky Boy.
- Participated in the Montana Transition Task Force
- Held the second annual empowerment conference for Native Americans
- Established contracts with 5 reservations for work incentive and other work-related projects (Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy's, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Crow Agency, and the Blackfeet Manpower program).

**11) Look at the needs of urban Native Americans with disabilities who do not live on the reservation.**

**MVR Response:** The MVR Council Native American committee is in the process of gathering population data of urban Native Americans.

MVR staff has met with the following Native American Urban Centers to provide program and referral information, literature regarding MVR and MVR transitions, and to discuss transition services for youth:

- Great Falls Indian Family Health Center
- Helena Indian Health Services
- Butte North American Indian Alliance
- Butte North American Indian Alliance Youth Program
- Indian Health Board of Billings

**12) Increase the percentage of rehabilitated consumers who have health insurance at closure. The 2006 percentage of rehabs with health insurance through their employment was 26.1%. The 2006 percentage of rehabs with any kind of health insurance (including Medicaid and Medicare) was 69.5%.**

**MVR Response:** In 2007, 239 out of 912 (26.2%) rehabs had insurance through their employer. The 2007 percentage of rehabs with any kind of health insurance (including Medicaid and Medicare) was 70.9% (647 out of 912).

**13) Encourage each region to hold a focus group on mental health issues.**

**MVR Response:** The Butte Region held their focus forum “Mental Illness and the Consumer” on June 3, 2008. The Great Falls region held their focus forum, "Improving Job Training Opportunities for MVR Customers with Mental Illness” on May 7, 2008.

The Billings and Missoula regions are in the planning stage of holding their forums. Billings does participate in the mental health advisory council. This region will have a counselor out-stationed for a short time each two weeks at the HUB (a mental health drop in treatment and support facility in Billings).

**14) Establish a liaison with the Department of Corrections and become familiar with their programs related to disability.** To date, a liaison has been established in the Missoula Region. The Butte Region has regular contact with various programs related to the Department of Corrections such as: Warm Spring Addiction Treatment and Change (WATCH), Sanction Treatment Assessment Revocation & Transition (START) and Corrections Connections on the Warm Springs campus; NEXUS Methamphetamine Treatment Center in Lewistown, and the Men and Women's Center in Butte in Helena.

Meeting minutes for the MVR council can be accessed at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/rehabilitationcouncil/index.shtml>

## **Attachment 4.10**

### **Procedures and Activities Regarding the Establishment and Maintenance of a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

## Data System

Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) information is contained in the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) CSPD database. This database manages information on training offered throughout the year. Information can be sorted by staff person, training event, or CRC number.

Data from the federal RSA-2 shows that the number of person-years for VR staff has decreased over the past five years. This is because of state-imposed vacancy savings. The chart below shows the distribution of personnel (using the RSA-2 definition) over the years:

| Montana VR Staffing by Type of Staff (data from RSA2) |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
|   | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Administrative  | 6    | 7    | 5    | 6    |
| Counselor   | 39   | 37   | 37   | 37   |
| Staff supporting counselor activities                 | 41   | 40   | 40   | 40   |
| Other   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Total Staff   | 86   | 84   | 82   | 83   |

Looking at budgeted personnel, MVR employs 39.8 FTE counselors, 4 rehabilitation teachers, 4 orientation and mobility instructors, and 5 regional administrators. These are the only staff that require certification or a CSPD plan leading to certification. In FY 2007, MVR served 7,313 Montanans with disabilities, which means that each counselor FTE served 184 consumers. Unfortunately, the population in western Montana continues to grow, while the population in eastern Montana decreases. The 7 counties in the Missoula region (Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, Sanders) increased 24.5% between the 1990 census and the 2000 census. In addition, census data shows that these counties increased in population another 7.5% (19,964 people) between the 2000 census and July of 2005.

Although the population in other parts of the state is steady or declining, there is not a “pocket” where the decline is large enough to take away a counselor. Montana has such large travel distances for counselors to meet with consumers that this is not possible. During the 2007 Legislature, Montana VR received an additional counselor position to work specifically with transition age youth in western Montana. This position is a “hybrid” which spends approximately half time with counseling duties and half time

with program officer duties. We expect that the new counselor will relieve some of the large caseloads in Missoula, but the area is still growing, and the caseloads will continue to increase.

When all the positions are filled, MVR has enough staff to provide vocational rehabilitation services to the state.

In the next 5 years, Montana VR will continue to investigate the feasibility of increased counselor staffing to meet the transitions needs of Montana's youth with disabilities. MVR would like to see a transitions counselor in each of its four regional offices. In addition, in the next five years, Missoula will need another counselor. Of course, population growth and client demographics will be closely monitored. If our counseling staff increases, it would be likely that additional support staff would also be necessary. Also in the next 5 years, Montana VR will experience significant turnover in upper management positions, including the state director, chief of field services, and at least one regional administrator. Montana VR has been anticipating this turnover and is addressing it through the Futures program, which is discussed elsewhere in this plan. This will create a need for hiring more counselors as employees are promoted through the system. In addition, normal staff turnover means that new staff will need to be hired each year.

### **(1) Recruitment and Retention**

MVR continues to review, on a yearly basis, the reported training needs of its entire staff. This is part of our overall maintenance of the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development. Of particular concern to MVR is the implementation of a system of personnel development that will ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation personnel for the designated state unit. Montana's Vocational Rehabilitation Council has had an opportunity to review and make comments on the development of the plans and policies regarding qualified personnel.

Currently Montana has identified 97.3%, or 36 of the 37 professional counseling and supervisory staff as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC), qualified to sit for the CRC, or under a CSPD Plan. The agency director is a CRC. At this time there are eight counselors pursuing the requirements necessary to qualify to sit for the CRC examination.

Montana's personnel policy has been rewritten so applicants who have achieved the CRC status receive a higher priority for hiring than those without it. In addition, Montana vigorously recruits for master's level degrees in rehabilitation counseling when there are vacancies. MVR has a good working relationship with the Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate Programs at Montana State University – Billings and Utah State University. Both of these institutions have sought input from MVR related to curriculum development and how best to prepare students to work in the public VR program. MVR has successfully recruited and hired graduates of these two programs, who were well prepared to sit for the CRC examination.

MVR also tracks the current enrollment of MVR staff in the following educational programs: Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling through the Distance Education Program at Utah State University (USU) in Logan, Utah (five staff), and the Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Montana State University (MSU) in Billings, Montana (one staff). Two additional staff are researching these two programs to determine which they will attend. USU graduates 25 to 30 individuals per year in their vocational rehabilitation masters program, and MSU-Billings graduates 10 to 12 individuals per year in their rehabilitation counseling program.

Turnover of rehabilitation counselors in Montana has been manageable. The agency continues to have qualified professionals applying for rehabilitation counselor positions – especially in our larger cities. MVR will continue to recruit the highest quality staff available. MVR projects turnover will remain constant, with some difficulty recruiting master's level rehabilitation counselors in some regions of the state. Individuals coming to MVR without a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling will be hired on the condition that they will develop a CSPD Plan to meet the standard.

Through the extensive efforts of the Blind and Low Vision Services staff and the personnel staff within the department, MVR has been able to attract candidates from across the country for Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Specialists.

Montana has no state university training for either Rehabilitation Teaching or Orientation and Mobility, and therefore, attracting highly qualified professionals in these areas will continue to be a problem for MVR. In an effort to address this dilemma, training positions have been developed.

MVR maintains contact with Montana State University-Billings to update them on the MVR Program. The agency gathers information on degree requirements, and work with rehabilitation counseling instructors to ensure that university requirements are compatible with those needed to qualify counselors to effectively and efficiently serve people with significant disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. MVR works with Montana colleges to recruit individuals from minority backgrounds and persons with significant disabilities. MVR takes affirmative action to employ and advance in employment, qualified individuals with significant disabilities.

In Montana, Native Americans make up the largest minority population. Montana has six Native American Section 121 Projects housed on reservations and employing Native Americans as rehabilitation counselors. However, with the new CSPD standard requiring education at the graduate level, the general MVR program has difficulty recruiting qualified Native Americans for employment within the agency. The one tribal college program, providing a Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation, has been discontinued and MVR lost that program as a resource for potential employees.

By developing a plan to assure adequate numbers of CRC counselors and by providing leadership training at all levels, MVR is working to develop future leaders who will be ready to take over key positions as they are vacated. Towards this effort, MVR has formed a leadership council that will work directly with current MVR management staff in the design and implementation of the process and format for case services to consumers. Staff participating on this leadership council, referred to as the MVR Futures Group, will provide the skills necessary to take MVR into the future.

MVR Futures is composed of current staff who have been successfully employed by the agency for a minimum of two years, have completed specific prerequisite training in supervision and/or management and who are or have been, enrolled in approved leadership training.

Participation in the MVR Futures Group involves a competitive application process and involves a three-year term for staff members and two-year term for the regional administrator. Successful completion of a three-year term in the MVR Futures Group has a proposed equivalency of two years of management experience within MVR. Allowing staff to participate in real-life problem solving and real-life improvements to our current service delivery system serves the agency well and provides a mechanism for honing the skills of future leaders within the agency.

MVR also works closely with two Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education programs to provide in-service training to our staff. Presently, staff members are taking advantage of regularly offered videoconference training on a variety of pertinent topics.

### **Personnel Standards**

MVR has a system for ensuring the yearly evaluation (annual review of each counselor's CSPD status to arrive at the percentage of "qualified" staff) and performance of each staff member. The performance evaluation of rehabilitation counselors and other professionals is paramount to our efforts to ensure quality services to Montanans with disabilities. Our evaluations are tied to specific performance activities leading to those quality services.

The standard for counseling staff in Montana is to qualify to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination or to have qualified to sit in the past, with the completion of additional coursework---and then to complete such coursework. Initially, MVR had targeted 2007 as the year in which we would meet our CSPD goal of having all counselors meet the standard of qualifying to sit for the CRCC examination. Unfortunately, as more experienced employees retire there is not a ready pool of qualified professionals to hire into those vacated positions. In "difficult to recruit for positions" MVR will hire individuals with a Bachelor's Degree in a related field (at the minimum) and develop a CSPD plan to ensure that the employee moves toward qualifying to sit for the CRC examination. It typically takes an individual hired with a Bachelor's Degree three years to meet the standard. Blind and Low Vision Services instructional staff must be eligible to hold the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals Certification.

Montana has identified eight to ten rehabilitation counselors who need graduate level training to qualify to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination. Currently, six are enrolled in the programs mentioned above and two are preparing to enter the above-mentioned graduate programs within twelve months. MVR anticipates that the distance education graduate programs will take the average rehabilitation counselor approximately two to three years to complete. Without the distance-learning component, MVR would be unable to set this plan in motion, as this allows for the counselor to complete their graduate education while remaining on the job. Through continued use of the distance education programs, MVR anticipates maintaining/increasing the numbers of Certified Rehabilitation Counselors over the next several years. MVR counselors have completed a graduate program in Rehabilitation Counseling at an average rate of 3 per year. This has been the trend for at least the last eight years.

CSPD requirements dictate master's level coursework. CSPD funds are also written into the current in-service training grant; however, Rehabilitation Services Administration scholarships are utilized whenever available to the graduate student. MVR's comprehensive efforts to meet the training needs of staff provide significant benefit in terms of recruitment of new staff and retention of existing staff.

One counselor is eligible for retirement and one has experienced a decrease in duties.

### **(3) Communication with Diverse Populations**

MVR requires that rehabilitation counselors who are hired to work with deaf and hard of hearing consumers have fluent sign language skills. Sign language interpreters for the deaf or hard of hearing are also provided when necessary. Other accommodations, such as documentation in alternative formats, are routinely made by MVR. MVR policy is to consult with the consumer to determine the most appropriate mode of communication.

Montana has a relay system for telephone communication with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing and offices are equipped with TTYs. Three offices (with the highest numbers of deaf/hard of hearing clients) have video phones for enhanced communication. The Montana Telecommunications Access Program is housed in the Department and lends tremendous technical support to MVR working with sensory impaired consumers. The agency has

also developed a full time Assistive Technology Specialist position. The Deaf Center is operational and provides interpreter referrals and other services to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. MVR purchases interpreter services from the Deaf Center.

#### **(4) Staff Development**

MVR does complete training needs assessment on all employees each year. MVR identifies, through this process, major themes for training large groups as well as individualized training topics identified by staff and their supervisors. This assessment provides for a comprehensive set of training topics that remain fluid as emerging priorities are developed either at the national level or within the state. It is also used to provide information for conference planning purposes to associations such as the Montana Association for Rehabilitation and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MVR Human Resource Development Specialist has responsibility for in-service training, the preparation of Montana's in-service grant, and for overall coordination of the agency's Comprehensive System for Personnel Development. MVR also completes CSPD assessments on all counselors in a plan to meet the standard. Each year, staff who do not meet the standard are counseled and their annual course of action is determined and documented. Of course, the purpose of this annual review is to continue to move counselors toward meeting the standard. Once counselors meet the standard by qualifying to sit for the CRC examination they receive a 3% pay raise, with an additional 3% upon successful completion of the CRC exam.

MVR places a heavy emphasis on leadership at all levels and continuous improvement of staff skills at all levels. Leadership and succession planning training are available to all staff in one form or another. MVR currently utilizes the Emerging Leaders Series through the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation at Western Washington University and the department leadership program for staff development. Building on the formalized leadership/management training available to staff through the aforementioned programs, MVR helps future leaders hone their skills through participation in the MVR Futures Group. Additionally, there is emphasis on training in the areas of rehabilitation technology, informed choice, cultural diversity, current rehabilitation trends and disability information, and the Rehabilitation Act with its amendments. Training on topics such as rehabilitation technology, assessment, vocational counseling,

and job placement is held at annual meetings such as All Staff, Bi-District, and Montana Association for Rehabilitation conference in addition to on-line seminars (for example through RRCEP). Often a representative of the agency is sent to out-of- state training to bring back and disseminate significant knowledge from research and other sources.

### **(5) Coordination of the CSPD and IDEA**

The MVR Comprehensive System of Personnel Development coordinates with the requirements of the CSPD under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in that both necessitate the following.

1. A description of the procedures and activities that the State of Montana will take to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel.
2. A system for determining, on an annual basis:
  - the number and type of personnel needed,
  - which institutions of higher education in the state are preparing vocational rehabilitation personnel, the number of students enrolled in the programs, the number who graduate with credentials to qualify for employment with the agency, and
  - when to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel with significant disabilities.
3. In-service training of all personnel:
  - detailed in-service training procedures to ensure that all personnel have access to training resources to enhance their professional skills, ultimately improving service delivery to consumers.

The new transition counselor will explore ways of coordinating training between MVR, OPI, and the schools. Across the state, there are a number of transition fairs that are held annually at the high schools. MVR presents at the transition fairs, and provides information regarding MVR services and how to access those services.

## **Attachment 4.11**

### **Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports**

- (b) Annual Estimates of Individual's to be Served and Costs of Services
- (c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
- (e)(2) Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities.

## **Attachment 4.11 (b)**

### **Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and the Cost of Services**

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During Federal Fiscal Year 2008, Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) estimates the following number of individuals will be served and the estimated cost of services:

- Estimated number of consumers with disabilities in Montana between the ages of 16 to 64 is 85,337 (2000 census).
- Title I Vocational Rehabilitation – It is estimated that a total of 7,300 consumers will be served at a case cost of around \$9.1 million (including Social Security). 900 consumers will be employed.
- Title VI-B funds – It is estimated that a total of 185 consumers will receive supported employment services at a case cost of around \$375,000. It is estimated that there will be 70 supported employment consumers employed.

## **Attachment 4.11 (c)(4)**

### **Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Part B Funds**

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Supported employment services are provided on a statewide basis through the Title VI, Part B funds. Supported employment is competitive employment or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work, with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Supported employment includes transitional employment for individuals with the most severe disabilities due to mental illness. Fund allocation on a statewide basis ensures an equitable statewide service delivery.

The goal of the state's supported employment program is to maintain a system whereby individuals with the most significant disabilities are afforded the opportunity to participate in integrated competitive employment.

Title VI, Part B funds will be distributed through four MVR regional budgets. Rehabilitation counselors at the local level will authorize Supported Employment services as needed from the Community Rehabilitation Programs statewide. MVR estimates that approximately \$375,000.00 will be expended on Supported Employment services in FY 2009. Funding sources include: \$300,000 in Title VI, Part B funds, supplemented with approximately \$75,000 in Title 1 (Section 110) funds. It is estimated that a total of 185 consumers will receive supported employment services at a case cost of around \$375,000. It is estimated that there will be 70 supported employment consumers employed.

Supported employment services are available statewide.

## Strategies:

- **Inventory methods of supporting consumers on the job following supported employment outcomes**
  - a) Extended Employment – Rocky Mountain Rehab
  - b) Mental Health cooperative agreement
  - c) Developmental Disabilities cooperative agreement
  - d) Private pay to CRP (CRP is signoff)
  - e) Natural supports
  - f) Medicaid waiver program
  
- **Expand resources for extended support services by asking the Legislature for more funding:** MVR will request more money for extended support funding during the EPP process.
  
- **Expand the number of mental health providers as CRPs to serve those with severe and persistent mental illness. There are currently six mental health providers that provide supported employment services.** In the Great Falls region, the mental health center in Havre is now providing supported employment and placement services. The Missoula region has contacted mental health providers in Libby and Kalispell, but at this time they have not become providers for MVR. This goal will be ongoing, state-wide.

## Attachment 4.11 (e)(2)

### Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Goals and Priorities and use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

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#### Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Title 1 funds being used at this time are to support the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Council, which meet four times during the year to conduct business. Expenditures included travel, stipends, supplies, meeting room rental interpreters, facilitation services and costs related to consumer satisfaction.

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#### Assessment of Montana Vocational Rehabilitation in meeting the Performance Standards and Indicators

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Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) has always been very mindful of the federal standards and indicators and has monitored the development of its performance. Utilizing fiscal year 2007 data, MVR and the Council have assessed the agency's performance in meeting the minimum requirements for standards 1 and 2. The following chart displays the outcome of this assessment.

| Standard/Indicator                 | Minimum Requirement                              | MVR Outcome             | Indicators Met |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------|
| Standard 1:<br>Employment Outcomes | 4 of 6 Indicators and 2<br>of the 3 Primary Ind. | All Indicators were met | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.1                      | 910  | 912                     | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.2                      | 55.8%  | 57.9%                   | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.3                      | 72.6%  | 96.5%                   | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.4                      | 62.4%  | 78.4                    | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.5                      | .52  | .67                     | Yes            |
| Indicator 1.6                      | 53%  | 58.9%                   | Yes            |
| Standard 2<br>Minority             | The Indicator must be<br>met                     | The Indicator was met   | Yes            |
| Indicator 2.1                      | .80  | .87                     | Yes            |

MVR has incorporated the standards and indicators into performance appraisals for staff. MVR and the Council will continue to monitor the performance outcomes throughout the year and work to consult with MVR

Regional Administrators to assure compliance in meeting the required indicators. MVR tracks the indicators on a quarterly basis so adjustments can be made in areas that may need some attention.

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## **Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Goals and Priorities**

*Actions taken in support of MVR's Goals and Priorities identified in the previous State Plan:*

### **1) Successfully assist people with disabilities to achieve their employment goals.**

#### **A. Continue to meet or exceed the standards and indicators established by RSA.**

MVR has met all of the Federal Indicators in FY07.

#### **D. Make available a list of qualified benefits planners.**

This has been completed in all 4 regions.

#### **E. Offer referral to benefit planners at intake to new SSI and SSDI consumers.**

This has been completed state-wide. In the Billings region, the benefits planning list and introductory statement are included in each new application package and are reviewed with SSA applicants. In the Butte region, all counselors have begun offering benefits planning to referred or active SSA applicants. In the Great Falls region, information on benefit planning services available to SSA recipients is provided at weekly MVR informational meetings, and is followed up with more detailed information at the initial meeting with the counselor. The Missoula region currently does not have a certified planner, but does encourage case managers of consumers in the mental health system to facilitate benefits analysis prior to MVR referral.

**H. Train consumers in transportation options by asking the independent living centers to present travel training at each regional office every two years.**

Billings: During a regional staff meeting, Independent Living (LIFTT) presented training on, and discussed transportation options in that region. Both MVR and LIFTT have representation on and participate in Transportation Advisory Councils (TACs). Great Falls: The regional administrator regularly participates in TAC meetings. Information obtained is brought back to the regional staff. North Central Independent Living Services has been invited to make a presentation on transportation and “travel training”. Missoula: The counselor supervisor has attended community meetings regarding transportation. Blind and Low Vision: Orientation and Mobility Specialists provide training to consumers in the use of alternative transportation options.

**I. Provide more access regarding new and emerging technologies by providing training at statewide events such as the annual All Staff meeting. Sources of training could be Parents Let’s Unite for Kids (PLUK) and the Rural Institute.**

The Billings region is working on a pilot project for using video-phones or Polycom internet based audio and video cam technology for attending IEP meetings and providing training in rural schools. In this endeavor, expertise and advice is being sought from PLUK, Montana State University-Billings, and SummitNet.

BLV hired an assistive technology specialist this fall. The MVR assistive technology specialist is pursuing training on the adaptive software and hardware for people with visual impairments. He attended two workshops by Freedom Scientific in January 2008. He will set up training and provide information about new technologies at the BLV spring staff meeting.

MVR is in the process of coordinating with MonTECH to provide expanded training and access to new and emerging technologies.

## **2) Assure that consistent, high quality transition services are made available statewide.**

### **A. Continue identifying and communicating with students with disabilities in schools.**

The Legislature approved funding for a transitions counselor, and that position has been hired in Missoula. On January 7, a web conference was held: “Montana VR – Navigating the Transition from School to Work”. MVR is a co-sponsor of a transitions conference in September in Great Falls: “Transition to What?” Five MVR staff attended training in January 2008 on “Facilitating Successful Transitions for Youth and Young Adults with Brain Injury”. MVR administrations staff are engaged in the Governor’s Transition Task Force and are working on the systems issues of transitions.

In the Butte region, all counselors and BLVS staff presented at “Graduating Seniors Transition Career Expo”: approximately 300 seniors from Butte and the surrounding areas attended this Expo.

In the Great Falls region, all of the counselors are actively involved in transition activities. Informational presentations at the schools are occurring in Great Falls, and the outlying areas. All of the counselors keep a log of their school presentations and transition activities.

In the Missoula region, staff participates in transition fairs and attends IEPs either in person or by phone. The transitions counselor has weekly hours in three Missoula schools.

The BLV counselors in all regions have contact with the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) outreach workers and actively contact schools to let them know BLV is available for transitioning students attending MSDB in the vision unit to work on transition.

### **B. Continue updating and maintaining MVR liaisons with schools and the school contact list for transitions.**

The lists have been updated, statewide.

#### **D. Continue to explore video conferencing for transition services**

The Billings region is in the process of purchasing video conferencing equipment suitable for work with Polycom systems such as those used by SummitNet, OPI, and universities. The Great Falls region has video conferencing capabilities which are used to communicate with customers who are deaf. There has been some compatibility issues, which they are attempting to resolve. The other two regions are exploring video conferencing options.

#### **H. Explore transition programs in other states.**

The transitions counselor has attended national meetings and has met with leaders in the transitions effort. The Rural Institute keeps MVR counselors informed about transition trainings and news

#### **M. Coordinate annually with disability services office at university level (regional level).**

MVR regularly coordinates with Disability Services at the various colleges, statewide. Formal presentations on MVR services occurred at MSU College of Technology and the University of Great Falls. In Missoula, staff met with the University of Montana staff in the business office, financial aid, student services, career services and medical withdrawal offices. A Missoula counselor with experience working in student services has been designated the liaison to the University of Montana.

### **3) Build Awareness and understanding of MVR services.**

#### **A. Educate legislators, consumers, and the general public on VR services by sending out quarterly updates through the Friends of Rehab mailing list.**

MVR sent the following items to its “Friends of Rehab” mailing list: (1) update on the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (August 17, 2007); (2) link to web page of MVR state plan the IL state plan (October 17, 2007); (3) copy of the MVR Council Governor’s Report (January 4, 2008) ;(4) information on the MVR & IL Public Hearing (December 13, 2007 and January 29,

2008). The MVR Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council each have a legislator that sits on the respective councils.

**C. Invite at least one business in each region to do a presentation at a staff meeting.**

In Billings, the Human Resources Director of Yellowstone County spoke to the office regarding use of handicapped preference, jobs available through counties, jobs that are hard to fill and ones that have more qualified applicants.

The Butte region met with the director of Kids Management Authority to discuss their program and to determine how to help the underserved kids who are in that program.

The Great Falls region has an excellent working relationship with Cable Technologies, Inc. The president of the company and the human resource director has been to the MVR office to discuss employment opportunities. Great Falls staff has toured their facility.

**D. Expand career fair activity in more communities (as an employer and consumer resource)**

Staff have attended career fairs in the following communities: Glendive, Miles City, Billings, Butte, Helena Lewistown, Kalispell, Hamilton and Missoula. These include job fairs, health fairs, job jamborees, and “project homeless” (career and service fair targeting homeless in the Billings area).

**4) Develop opportunities for better jobs and on-the-job supports for people who are working.**

**A. Inventory methods of supporting consumers on the job following supported employment closure.**

- Extended Employment – Rocky Mountain Rehab
- Mental Health Cooperative Agreement
- Developmental Disabilities Program Cooperative Agreement
- Private pay (occasionally)
- Natural supports

- Medicaid Waiver Program

**B. Expand resources for Extended Employment program by asking the Legislature for more funding.**

MVR has requested that the Department consider the following in the Executive Planning Process:

- 2% rate increase for providers
- Funding for the waiting list - to serve 50 people per year (100 total in two years).

**C. Study and explore post-BA eligibility and educational opportunities.**

**MVR Response:** The chief of field services has met several times with representatives of MVR, the Montana Advocacy Program and MVR Advisory Council members to work on specific language to clarify the decision process and criteria used by the MVR agency in the determination of how a consumer will qualify for support in Masters level training. The negotiations have resulted in draft procedural language and a training protocol for counselors. Counselor training will be conducted in the next years Bi District/All Staff training cycle.

**D. Invite the National Business Network to present at the 2008 All Staff meeting.**

This did not occur, as Montana does not have the large national employers typical of partnerships with the network. The 2008 All Staff had presentations on the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center, Transitions, VA presentation on PTSD, and Mental Illness and Personality Disorders.

**5) Enhance MVR services specifically for people with mental illness, brain injuries, and learning disorders.**

**A. Require each region have a focus group on mental health issues.**

The Butte Region held their focus forum “Mental Illness and the Consumer” on June 3, 2008. The Great Falls region held their focus forum "Improving

Job Training Opportunities for MVR Customers with Mental Illness” on May 7, 2008.

The Billings and Missoula regions are in the planning stage of holding their forums. Billings does participate in the mental health advisory council. This region will have a counselor out-stationed for a short time each two weeks at the HUB (a mental health drop in treatment and support facility in Billings).

MVR continues to provide pocket of expertise with pertinent mental health training. In October 2007, fourteen MVR staff from across the state attended the 2007 Montana conference on mental illness, “The Journey of Recovery”.

**B. Get baseline information on how we serve consumers with mental illness, brain injuries and learning disorders: # 26s: wage at closure, service rate, geographic areas. Develop a strategy to address areas of weakness.**

To date, MVR has gathered the following baseline information:

| Standard                      | 1                           | 2        | 3                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
|                               | Received Services (26 + 28) | 26 Count | Rehab Rate (Column 2/1) |
| Psychosocial Impairments - 18 | 334                         | 182      | 54.49                   |
| Traumatic Brain Injury - 37   | 48                          | 26       | 54.17                   |
| Learning Disabilities - 34    | 113                         | 72       | 63.72                   |

| Psychosocial Impairments (18) - 05-FEB-08 |            |               |
|---|------------|---------------|
| District Name                             | # of 26s   | Avg Hrly Wage |
| BILLINGS - IV                             | 50         | 8.47          |
| BUTTE - II                                | 49         | 9.56          |
| GREAT FALLS - III                         | 31         | 8.62          |
| MISSOULA - I                              | 52         | 9.83          |
|   | Count: 182 |               |
| Traumatic Brain Injury (37) - 05-FEB-08   |            |               |
| District Name                             | # of 26s   | Avg Hrly Wage |
| BILLINGS - IV                             | 6          | 8.6           |
| BLIND & LOW VISION - V                    | 1          | 15            |
| BUTTE - II                                | 7          | 8.27          |
| GREAT FALLS - III                         | 4          | 6.91          |

|  |           |               |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| MISSOULA - I                           | 8         | 9.36          |
|  | Count: 26 |               |
| Learning Disabilities (34) - 05-FEB-08 |           |               |
| District Name                          | # of 26s  | Avg Hrly Wage |
| BILLINGS - IV                          | 18        | 7.43          |
| BUTTE - II                             | 23        | 11.4          |
| GREAT FALLS - III                      | 16        | 9.64          |
| MISSOULA - I                           | 15        | 7.91          |
|  | Count: 72 |               |

**D. Focus one state training event (All Staff or Montana Association for Rehabilitation (MAR)) in 2008 on mental health issues. Find models and bring in representatives from successful programs.**

Several speakers presented on the topic of mental health at the 2007 MAR conference, as well as the April 2008 All Staff meeting (personality disorders and PTSD). In addition, a MVR Council member who has a mental disability gave a presentation at All Staff: “Consumers with Mental Illness and the Counselors who Assist Them”.

**6) Collaborate with other appropriate agencies and 121s to enhance outcomes for consumers.**

**B. Stay informed with what is going on with independent living and Montana Transportation Partnerships regarding transportation.**

The MVR program, Rural Institute and Independent Living Centers across the state are working jointly on the “Working Well with a Disability Project.” This study may produce a product that will improve health, wellness and employment outcomes for MVR consumers in Montana and across the United States. A secondary byproduct of this project is improved collaboration between agencies involved.

The Missoula region met with Summit Independent Living staff to discuss services and common issues, including transportation.

**C. Work with 121 projects to determine needs and alignment with MVR. The MVR liaison will contact the 121s and ask for input regarding the needs on their respective Reservations.**

The 121s were contacted in April 2007 for their input regarding the needs on their respective Reservations, and this information was included during the Comprehensive Assessment of Needs for the FY2008 state plan. The 121s will be contacted in 2009 regarding their respective needs.

**D. Maintain joint training with 121 projects. The MVR 121 liaison will continue to notify the 121 projects about training opportunities such as All Staff, MAR conference, CTAT training opportunities, etc. Send the 121 projects any updated information on the MVR counselor manual.**

MVR sent the following items to all six 121 projects: (1) training opportunity provided by the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research “Inclusion of Minorities in Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation” (August 6, 2007); (2) Montana Association of Rehabilitation annual conference dates and agenda (September 2007); (3) training opportunity provided by CTAT “TBI Employment Distant Training on Traumatic Brain Injury” (October 12, 2007); (4) training opportunity provided by Pathfinders Associates “Boundaries and Sensibility: Ethical Considerations for the Placement Professional” (October 29, 2007), (5) MVR policy and procedure changes (October 30, 2007); (6) information for the 2008 MVR All Staff meeting (February 26, 2008).

**E. Continue good relationships with all the 121s. Visit each Reservation with a 121 project when invited.**

The MVR liaison met with 121 Project Directors (at their invitation) on the Salish Kootenai Reservation (November 2007) and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation (December 2007). She attended the Browning Disability Conference (along with three other MVR staff) in October 2007.

The Great Falls BLVS counselor is teaming with MonTECH, Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) and the Montana State Library to conduct a disability services day-long presentation at each reservation in his area.

**F. Provide technical assistance to the 121s when requested.**

In December 2007, the MVR 121 liaison met with the Northern Cheyenne 121 Project at their request to provide training regarding the Ticket to Work program.

**G. Continue participation on federal benefits workshops on Reservations. Attend at least two federal benefits workshops per year on Reservations.**

MVR staff presented at the Federal Benefits Workshop in Fort Peck on 4/24/08 and in Browning on 5/14/08.

**H. Inform disability groups about progress being made on the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.**

An update on the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant was sent to the “Friends of Rehab” list on August 17, 2007. Barbara Kriskovich, grant director, updated the MVR Council at its January 2008 meeting.

**I. Support inclusion of Medicaid Buy-In in the EPP process.**

MVR will support the inclusion of Medicaid Buy-In in the EPP process.

**J. Develop or improve the Community Rehab Program (CRP). Convene the CRP liaison group via telephone conference call four times per year to discuss CRP issues and possible solutions. Contact the CRPs regarding what their needs for improvement are in FY2008.**

Four CRP liaison conference calls have been held so far in SFY2008: July, September, October and January. Topics covered:

- Updates on CRP issues in each region
- CRP Data Report
- Update on new CRP rates
- Creation of “Frequently Asked Questions” regarding the rate change

The CRPs were contacted in April 2007 for their input regarding their needs. This information was included during the Comprehensive Assessment of Needs for the FY2008 state plan. The CRPs will be contacted in 2009 regarding their respective needs

**K. Identify and encourage additional CRP participation. The MVR/CRP rates committee will have at least two CRP representatives that serve on the committee. MVR will contact at least two mental health facilities in FY2008 regarding their interest in becoming a provider for MVR.**

The MVR/CRP rates committee has two providers (Flathead Industries and COR) that are represented on the committee. This group will meet one more time in October 2008 to assess how the new change in rates is working.

MVR has contacted Mental Health providers in Havre, Libby and Kalispell this past year.

## **7) Continue attention to in-service training and meeting CSPD qualifications**

**A. Continue to provide in-service training to staff so they continue to be qualified.**

Each year, an annual needs assessment is completed by the field staff to assist with determining training needs.

In-service training events across the state in the past year have included: counselors participating in several Creative Training Accelerating Talent (CTAT); presentations by VA Vocational Rehabilitation, frequently used psychologists, University of Montana programs and mental health.

**B. Continue to require professional development plans for counselors.**

MVR's professional development plans for counselors are required, and are reviewed on an annual basis.

**F. Provide staff with information on employment trends (demographics, labor market, interagency linkages and changes).**

In the Billings region, interagency linkages are discussed at every staff meeting. This region also participates in "round robin" exchange type training with 20 other Community Management Team (CMT) agencies and programs. The Great Falls region receives regular emails and distributions

from the workforce centers identifying employment and labor market trends. The Missoula region invites MVR staff to attend CMT events, and CMT information is also shared at staff meetings.

**G. Continue good succession planning program and prepare for upcoming retirements of senior management.**

The Billings region has a practice of “participation by two” when possible. This way, strategic personnel learn about giving presentations, negotiating relationships and coordinating services on a larger scale.

The Great Falls region has several staff participating in management training through the Professional Development Center. In the past year, one counselor in this region completed the “Essentials of Management” course through Eastern WA University, and applied for and was accepted into the MVR Futures Group. To assist with succession planning and facilitate a smooth transition, staff are often involved in tasks which broadens their knowledge base and exposure. One of the Great Falls regional goals is to provide as much “cross-training” as possible.

In Missoula, the Regional Administrator currently participates in MVR Futures. Two staff from this region has completed the Futures group, and one staff recently applied to be on the group.

**8) Expand our staff recruitment effort**

**B. Enhance recruitment through expanding internships through Futures, participating in career fairs and making contact with universities regarding employment opportunities.**

The Billings region has consistently had interns from the rehabilitation counselor training program at Montana State University-Billings. Last semester, two master’s degree students received training and participated in assisting with service provision to a full range of consumer services. Recently an intern was hired as a rehabilitation counselor in Bozeman.

The Great Falls region presents annually to classes at the University of Great Falls. These presentations provide information on the MVR program and

educate master's level students on opportunities for employment in the field of rehabilitation.

**C. Recruit and hire a Deaf Coordinator in Great Falls.**

The Deaf Coordinator position in Great Falls was filled in January 2008.

