

Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Vocational Rehabilitation

FFY2016

(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council:

The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) falls under a Commission of 5 Board Members (ICBVI Board) who are appointed by the Governor of Idaho. The ICBVI Board holds four meetings a year that is open to the public and a designated consumer input time is always on the agenda. The ICBVI Board reviews and approves all policy regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at ICBVI. Any recommendations by the ICBVI Board are discussed at the public meetings.

(b) Request for Waiver of State Wideness:

(Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

- (1) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (2) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:
 - a. nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization or individual;
 - b. services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
 - c. state, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in attachment 4.7(b)(3) a waiver of the state wideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - 1) identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - 2) written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - 3) written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - 4) written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.
- (3) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the state wideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

(c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Agreements between ICBVI and other agencies, in addition to all other services and activities of the ICBVI, are to be guided by the ICBVI Mission: The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) is a federal/state program designed to empower persons who are blind or visually impaired by providing vocational rehabilitation training, skills training and educational opportunities to achieve self-fulfillment through quality employment and independent living; to serve as a resource to families and employers and to expand public awareness regarding the potential of all persons who are blind or visually impaired.

(1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs

Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB): This agreement outlines how the two agencies will coordinate referrals, services and communication to benefit the transition of students with blindness and visual impairments throughout the State.

Reciprocal Referral Services between the two VR Programs in the State: The State of Idaho has two VR programs, the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The two programs have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish guidelines and policies to delineate the services both agencies will provide to individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, this agreement enhances cooperation and collaboration between the two agencies, improves inter-agency communication, and establishes staff cross-training opportunities.

(2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

ICBVI does not engage in any cooperative agreements carried out under section 4 of this Act.

(3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

ICBVI does not engage in any programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials.

- (1) The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.
- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:
 - a. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

- b. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;
- c. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
- d. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

ICBVI has strong relationships with education agencies throughout the state, including a formal interagency agreement with the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR).

Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) - Secondary Transition: Idaho Commission for Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI), Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) and the State Department of Education (SDE) currently have a formal cooperative agreement. This agreement ensures a coordinated, comprehensive system focusing on students with disabilities as they transition from secondary school to post-school activities, promoting post-secondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation emphasizing a team approach to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from public education into employment.

This agreement addresses the following:

- Roles and responsibilities of each agency, including which agency is state lead
- Financial responsibilities of each agency, including the purchase of Assistive Technology
- Outreach and technical assistance
- Referral process for students with disabilities to the appropriate VR program
- Data release and data sharing
- Planning to include timeframes for development of the IPE
- Service Delivery
- Dispute Resolution

While comprehensive, the current agreement will be updated to meet the mandatory requirements outlined in WIOA, specifically addressing additional financial criteria to be used to determine which agency is financially responsible for the provision of transition services and the documentation requirements for students who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

ICBVI VR Counselors and Administrative Office staff coordinates with education officials to work with blind and visually impaired students transitioning from the K-12 school system. VR counselors regularly meet with the Special Education teachers, teachers of the visually impaired, school counselors, school nurses and other personnel involved in school work transition. Students can be referred to ICBVI at age 14. A transition Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed to assist the student with their successful transition from school to work

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) New federal mandates require that ICBVI, in collaboration with local educational agencies, offer to transition age high school students with disabilities (ages 14-21) Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) using 15% of our federal allocation on an annual basis.

PETS services include: • Job exploration counseling • Work-based learning experiences, (which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experience outside the traditional school setting including internships, that are provided in an integrated environment) • Counseling on opportunities in comprehensive transition or enrollment in postsecondary educational programs • Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living Instruction in self-advocacy/peer mentoring. In order to reach those goals each ICBVI region is ensuring they have a strong relationship with the local school districts and the local Work Force Development Boards. Summer work experiences, work place readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and other work based learning experiences have been implemented and will continue to expand as the population of high school students we serve increases.

To facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, ICBVI will continue to have counselors assigned to each school district within their respective regions. It is the role of the assigned ICBVI counselors to provide outreach, technical assistance, information and referral to the secondary education officials in their assigned schools and districts as well as to assure the provision of direct services to eligible youth.

It is understood by all ICBVI staff working with transition age youth that their responsibility is to coordinate with the school's efforts to engage the youth in activities that will allow development of an individualized plan for employment before the youth leaves high school.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations:

ICBVI does not have cooperative agreements with private nonprofit service providers as we pay fee for service. Idaho procurement rules do not require purchasing certain goods/services from disability-related organizations and ICBVI does not participate in a group providing oversight to such a rule.

(f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services:

ICBVI coordinates with Health and Welfare and the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) Extended Employment Services (EES) program to provide long-term support for clients with the most significant disabilities who require supported employment and extended services. The Medicaid program in the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) has the Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) which provides long-term support for Community Supported Employment (CSE) and IDVR administers the EES program for long-term CSE support for those who do not qualify for Medicaid Waiver. ICBVI collaborates extensively with IDVR on CSE cases as usually those clients requiring CSE have multiple disabilities including developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury or mental illness which qualifies them for the long-term support programs.

(g) Coordination with Employers:

(1) VR Services

Through coordinated engagement, ICBVI and its workforce development partners will contribute to a more prosperous Idaho, providing businesses with talented job seekers to fill skill gaps and Idahoans

living with blindness or visual impairments with the rehabilitation, training, and employment services needed to thrive in Washington’s workplaces and communities.

Employers may request an Assistive Technology Assessments in order to hire a person with a visual impairment or who is blind; the ICBVI will work with the employer on the accommodation. This assessment may include website and network software accessibility as well as job site accommodations. ICBVI has a dedicated Assistive Technology Expert that assists all of the ICBVI VR counselors in AT and job site accommodation.

- (2) Transition Services; including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS)

Every summer, ICBVI host’s transition aged youth (16-21) for a 6 week Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) in Boise. Eligible youth from all over the state participate in this curriculum. During this program, all of the PETS services, as identified under WIOA, are delivered:

- Job and career exploration
- Independent Living Skills
- Job Readiness Training
- Soft skills
- Work-based learning experience
- Self-advocacy

ICBVI staff work with community employers to host our students for a work experience program. Students are paired with employers based upon interest and ability. Students are paid an hourly wage during this experience.

Throughout the year, ICBVI staff reach out to employers in their regional communities, promoting Work Opportunity Tax Credit), and provide support and assistance as allowed by WIOA regulations.

In coordination with workforce development partner’s at the state and local level, ICBVI will increase visibility in Idaho’s business community through outreach and education which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations and representation at career and recruitment fairs.

(h) Interagency Cooperation:

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (H&W) maintains all related programs in the state including the state Medicaid program, the state DD council, and the state Mental Health program. Under Medicaid H&W operates the Idaho Home and Community Based Settings project.

- (1) The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

ICBVI will work in cooperation with H&W as it relates to Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

- (2) The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

ICBVI will work collaboratively with Adult Developmental Disabilities Services program under the

Department of H&W for any clients who require and are eligible for these services.

- (3) The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

ICBVI will work in collaboration with IDHW to ensure that all clients' requiring MH services have access to these services.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development: Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development.

- (1) ICBVI maintains a system of job descriptions and incumbent staff in all positions.
- (2) An annual needs assessment is conducted internally by ICBVI to identify and analyze the training and development needs of all ICBVI rehabilitation personnel.
- (3) The Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (TACE) also conducts an annual needs assessment of ICBVI staff and summarizes the results of this assessment.

a. Qualified Personnel needs.

- 1) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served;

The Commission's current ratio of VR counselors to client's served per current fiscal year is 1:69.

- 2) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category;

ICBVI currently employs a total of 40 staff. The breakdown of personnel is as follows:

Professional staff: 1 Administrator; 1 Rehabilitation Services Chief; 5 Program Managers (ATC, BEP, IL, Fiscal/HR, Management Assistant); 6 Senior VR Counselors for the Blind; 14 Instructors for the Blind (Including one State Wide Assistive Technologist)

Administrative staff: 1 IT Technology Senior; 1 Fiscal Technician; 5 Vocational Rehabilitation Assistants; 1 BEP specialist; 2 Reader-drivers; 1 Storekeeper; 1 Receptionist; 2 Office Specialists

- 3) projections of the number of personnel, by category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years

ICBVI anticipates needing one additional VRC to accommodate growth in East Idaho, and 2 VRA positions are expected to be vacated due to retirement.

b. Personnel Development: Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- 1) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by program;

Idaho only has one institution of higher education, the University of Idaho (U of I), that prepares Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. This program began serving students in the Boise area in 2012. ICBVI continues to provide internships to students, when these are requested. The University of Idaho Rehabilitation Counseling and Human Services Program was awarded a 5-year \$1,000,000 Rehabilitation Training grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services - Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The grant includes a select number of student scholarships for tuition/fees, books and supplies, and travel to professional conferences. Upon graduation, recipients of the scholarships will, in return, agree to work two years for every year they receive a scholarship at a state vocational rehabilitation or related-rehabilitation agency.

- 2) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program;

The program is offered in two Idaho locations and will accommodate 25 students. They also offer a category "R" education program for individuals who have related Masters Degrees and need up to six additional courses to be eligible to sit for the CRC exam.

- 3) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from the institution with certification or licensure

From the current M.Ed./M.S. Rehabilitation Counseling and Human Services Program (RCHS) at the U of I, seven (7) students are expected to graduate from the Boise campus and nine (9) are expected to graduate from the Coeur D'Alene campus in May 2016. Our next cohort will begin May of 2016 and we are expecting to have full capacity of 25 students begin with this new cohort.) It is expected that students who will be graduating in May of 2016 will sit for the CRC exam in the Spring of 2016.

- (4) Plan for recruitment, preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel:

ICBVI's plan for recruitment will be to continue to recruit qualified staff from the University of Idaho and at other regional and national institutions of higher education. We maintain contact with Western Washington University, Utah State University, Portland State University, Western Oregon University, University of Wisconsin-Stout, University of Northern Colorado and Montana State University, all of which have Master's programs in Rehabilitation Counseling.

ICBVI also uses the following for recruitment of Senior VR Counselors and Senior Instructors for the Blind:

- Rehabilitation Recruitment Center
- The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) Website
- The Internet as utilized by the Idaho Division of Human Resources
- Word of mouth between the universities in the Western United States
- Internships and practicums completed by students with ICBVI

- Personal contact with instructors in university programs
- National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Website

To address the future need of eligible Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), ICBVI will provide funding as available for future VRC staff to obtain a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from a CORE (Council on Rehabilitation Education) accredited program.

ICBVI has provided internships for Master's level students in VR over the last five years and anticipates that it will provide an additional one to three internships in the next four years. Recruitment issues are handled by the hiring manager responsible for the position.

The U of I Rehabilitation Counseling and Human Services (RCHS) department provides educational opportunities for existing staff and other rehabilitation related organizations and individuals to advance the profession of rehabilitation counseling. Educational opportunities include not only formal university education but activities such as workshops, research projects, and specialty events, summer training conferences in conjunction with the Idaho Chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association, and internship positions within the University structure. Five professional development trainings were held in 2015 on relevant disability-related or rehabilitation issues for IDVR and related rehabilitation professionals to earn CRC CEUs. ICBVI continues to encourage further formal education and ICBVI financially supports this. Training is also received from different training venues put on by national groups such as AER, Helen Keller National Center, RSA, TACE, and other entities.

ICBVI continues to prioritize its recruitment efforts to meet the CSPD standards. When ICBVI is not able to hire a Senior Level Counselor it will utilize the under fill Counselor position (Counselor for the Blind) and support the staff in necessary education and training to meet the CSPD requirements. ICBVI has utilized both strategies effectively to recruit, hire and retain qualified personnel.

Presently, we employ 14 individuals with a disability, ten of whom are blind or visually impaired and 2 individuals are from a minority background. With a total staff of 40, this amounts to 40% of ICBVI's staff.

ICBVI participates in Career Fairs around the state to encourage and seek out individuals from diverse backgrounds including individuals with disabilities and from minority backgrounds.

ICBVI salaries compare favorably with the surrounding states in the Pacific Northwest. The agency also encourages and supports, costs, training/education time of staff and formal education and certification for staff.

ICBVI hires any person into a permanent position from a temporary position if they have to meet the minimum standards for that position as determined by the State of Idaho's Department of Human Resources for that classified position.

- (5) Personnel Standards: Describe the State Agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- a. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or – recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services;

The State of Idaho does not require a state licensure for rehabilitation counselors. Educational standards for personnel established by ICBVI for qualified rehabilitation professionals (QRP) are intended to meet a base level of quality expected by the Commission of its counselors.

Per Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) revisions to Rehabilitation Act CSPD requirements, ICBVI will revise educational qualifications for its Senior VRC classification. This revision, changing minimum education requirements from a master's degree to a bachelor's degree, and this position will remain defined as Counselor for the Blind. These incumbents will be required to obtain a qualifying master's degree to advance to Senior Level Counselor, and will be required to develop a plan for doing this with the Rehabilitation Services Chief.

ICBVI's minimum standards for Senior VR Counselor for the Blind are consistent with the national standard of CRC. ICBVI places great importance on recruiting, hiring and retraining staff that are appropriately and adequately trained to provide services to our blind and visually impaired clients. We currently have eight staff with CRC certification, including the Chief of Rehabilitation Services. In addition, we have 14 Instructors for the Blind and five of them have Master's degrees and/or AER Certification in Rehabilitation Teaching or Orientation and Mobility. We continue to encourage and financially support further formal education and certification.

ICBVI tracks and monitors each employee's individual training and development. Special emphasis is placed on training required to maintain CRC, LPC, or AER certification. This includes training on disability topics, vocational counseling, ethics, case management, assessment, job placement strategies and especially assistive technology for the blind and visually impaired.

Specific development needs identified for each employee are to be addressed in the following year during ICBVI plans of overall training and developmental priorities conducted staff-wide. While specific priorities evolve year-to-year, ICBVI consistently addresses assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology.

- b. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities.

ICBVI is committed to providing all employees with development opportunities which will enhance employee job performance; support the Commission's mission, values and goals; and lead to successful employment outcomes for individuals with blindness and visual impairments. With the increased WIOA emphasis on workforce development ICBVI will

also concentrate on providing training to strengthen business relationships and increase knowledge of labor market relevance and employer.

(6) Staff Development: Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

- a. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

Specific areas of training that are emphasized are training on the Rehabilitation Act and its regulations, Social Security Work Incentives and employment, IDEA for transition age students with blindness and visual impairment, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and vision related disabilities. Additionally, staff will be trained more specifically in Assistive Technology to better serve clients in the areas they live. This is accomplished through our monthly VRC conference calls, training and other scheduled trainings. . All these activities help with staff development and retention.

All agency personnel have an annual evaluation of his or her performance, goals and plans. It is during this process that ICBVI assesses how training has impacted an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of his or her position.

- b. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Succession planning and leadership development are discussed and emphasized to assist staff to enhance current skills or to build their skills for future opportunities for advancement within the agency. ICBVI has a policy to promote from within, which gives opportunities for current employees to advance and remain with the agency.

ICBVI continues to look for opportunities to collaborate on training and staff development with the Department of Education and the schools. ICBVI coordinates its CSPD activities with those provided under IDEA. We currently participate in:

The Interagency Task Force on Transition from School to Work;
Transition and Assistive Technology School to Work Conference: Tools for Life;
Independent Living Conference;
Training Conferences provided by the Association for the Education (AER) and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired;
Collaborative training with the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind.

ICBVI will continue to work closely with the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind addressing the needs of the transition population of the blind or visually impaired.

Throughout the year, training requests are approved for individual and group training in areas of interest or need. A variety of platforms are utilized for dissemination, including face-to-face training, conferences, and online webinars.

- (7) Personnel to address Individual Communication Needs: Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

ICBVI employees that are fluent in Spanish are recruited to serve the needs of the Hispanic communities located throughout the state.

ICBVI has chosen to purchase sign language interpreting services for individuals who are deaf. In cases where the client is deaf and blind, ICBVI will often work collaboratively with the general VR agency and the Helen Keller's national and regional centers to provide services. If ICBVI has a client who is monolingual speaking an interpreter will be hired by the agency.

- (8) Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

ICBVI VR counselors, under the direction and supervision of the Rehabilitation Services Chief, will facilitate the required coordination with the State Department of Education and provision of Pre-employment Transition Services, as required under WIOA. Additional training and education will be identified for staff regarding new services, new coordination and best practices in serving students with disabilities. VR counselors throughout the state will serve on regional Special Education and Transition Boards and Councils.

(j) Statewide Assessment:

- (1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR service needs of those:

ICBVI completed a Comprehensive Needs Assessment in FFY 2014 in accordance with the requirements of Section 101.15 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended. Three separate surveys were developed to thoroughly assess the needs of Idahoans who are blind or visually impaired. The survey participants included a random sample of closed VR clients, State and Federal Government Agencies, Consumer Groups, Secondary and Post-Secondary Educational Institutions, non-profit and profit organizations providing services and or advocacy, staff, Client Assistant Program, Independent Living

Centers, Lions Club, WIA partners, and Community Rehabilitation Programs. The Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment will be conducted every three years.

- a. Rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities include their need for supported employment services.

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment indicated that expansion of current services and additional services is a need. This is represented in specific recommendations being made to staff to provide services to both transition and post-transitional students, in various locations throughout the state. This included working with school districts to create classes such as Adapted Daily Living Skills, helping parents navigate choices, and providing work experiences.

Awareness of Agency Services: The comprehensive needs survey indicated that there was a need for ICBVI to more thoroughly communicate the specific programs within the overall VR/IL/OB programs. This was true primarily for organizations. Although organizations overall had a good awareness of ICBVI, it was the specific programs within the agency where awareness diminished.

Client Survey Results - The Comprehensive Needs Assessment for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program showed that most clients were very happy with the services, counseling, & products they have received from ICBVI. Of the 100 clients contacted 31 clients were willing to answer the survey questions. All clients were thankful for the services received from their VR counselor.

The greatest problem for those not employed was revolved around transportation. The clients said that transportation was very helpful in the past, but the budget cuts hurt the good transportation system they once received. Many of them cannot afford to pay for personal, reliable transportation to and from work. 28% of clients expressed their disability checks were not enough to cover the transportation costs. Walking to work was only an option for a few in the summer if they lived close enough.

94% of clients felt that services through ICBVI were provided in a timely manner, 3% did not and 3% were not applicable. 81% of clients had their VR Counselor discuss vocational options and goal choices when developing a plan for employment. 65% received all the services that were part of their agreed plan for employment. 65% of clients were made aware of the Assessment and Training Center, 16% were not, and 19% this didn't apply to. 65% received assistive technology assessments or services in the VR process, 16% did not, and 19% this did not apply to. 36% of clients found employment as a result of VR services, 29% did not, and 35% this did not apply to. 36% were satisfied with the employment after receiving VR services, 29% were not, and 35% did not apply to. And finally 64% of clients felt that ICBVI could do better to help them with employment, 13% did not, and 23% this did not apply to.

The greatest strength overall seemed to be with Aids / Appliances and Assistive Technologies provided by ICBVI. There was a tremendous amount of positive feedback on the services provided by all of the VR counselors.

- b. Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities.

From their experience with minority individuals with disabilities 86% of staff felt that services are needed for this population, 14% did not, 29% believed there are barriers to

the provision of these services, 57% did not, and 14% were unsure.

Idaho's population is expected to grow by almost 6% between 2014 and 2024, while at the same time, Hispanics, the state's largest minority, will grow much faster at almost 15%. ICBVI is vigilant to this change, and will continue and expand outreach efforts to minority populations.

- c. Rehabilitation needs of individuals who are un-served or underserved.

From their experience with underserved and unserved populations of individuals with disabilities 57% of staff felt that services are needed for this population, 29% did not, 14% were unsure, 57% believed there are barriers to the provision of these services, 29% did not, and 14% were unsure.

The WIOA Advisory group has clearly identified rural areas as a traditionally underserved population. ICBVI regional counselors have always served rural communities; often times in the manner of home visits. ICBVI will continue to serve (and expand as funding allows) more rural citizens and communities.

- d. Rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

ICBVI recognizes the need to increase partnerships with the statewide workforce investment system to develop innovative programs to serve common customers; such as with IDOL and IDVR. ICBVI staff and counselors provide ongoing training of job center staff on disability sensitivity issues. Other strategies include continuing to expand partnerships and encourage coordination of services, develop of new ways to provide for job creation or to provide incentives to employers, and to work cooperatively to remove stigmas in the workplace.

- e. Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services

ICBVI will increase our efforts to deliver services to students with blindness or visual impairments in response to WIOA mandates. ICBVI may participate with IDVR in respect to a statewide needs assessment as an authorized PETS activity to further determine the needs of this population.

- f. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

In Idaho, the ICBVI VR program works with many service providers including community rehabilitation programs. ICBVI VR will continue work in the following areas to improve services to consumers in partnership with all providers. Emphasis will be placed enhancing current programs to be more sensitive to the needs of those with blindness or visual impairments before developing more programs. ICBVI will also work with providers and CRP's to help them increase their capacity to develop new types of services, such as Pre-Employment Transitional Services (PETS) as mandated under WIOA.

- g. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

Aggregate data received from the Idaho State Department of Education (2015) has indicated that there are 103 children (ages 3-21) who have a primary disability of Visual Impairment. There are 105 children (ages 3-21) who have a primary disability of Deaf/Blind. ICBVI will continue to work with state and regional school systems to identify those students who are potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. ICBVI counselor will continue to participate in student IEP meetings, and assisting school staff to identify and deliver approved, individualized pre-employment transition services on the IEP.

(k) Annual Estimates:

- (1) The number of eligible individuals in the State who are eligible for services

The estimated number of all individuals who are eligible for services under this plan is 4,800.

- (2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

- a. The VR Program – Title I, Part B is 528
- b. The Supported Employment Program – Title VI Part B is 2
- c. Each category, if under an Order of Selection – ICBVI is not under an Order of Selection

- (3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an Order of Selection ; and

- (4) The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services

The estimated cost for services in FFY 2016:

- Title I Part B \$677,000
- Title VI Part B \$3,000

ICBVI has seen both service volumes and service costs increase. There has been a six to seven percent increase in cost of services year-over-year for the past three years. ICBVI sees no reason to expect a change in this trend in the immediate future. This increase in volume and cost, coupled with the redistribution of funds for PETS could accelerate the need for an Order of Selection in Idaho.

ICBVI believes it will be difficult to determine the impact of WIOA on number served without baseline data. While the Commission is committed to extending services to all eligible individuals, new provisions including services to ‘potentially eligible’ groups and pre-employment transition service requirements will both (1) diminish overall funds available to individuals categorized as ‘eligible’ and (2) fundamentally shift the way ICBVI spends 15%+ of program funds. Therefore the Commission feels that a projected range of 300-500 individuals to be served for FFY 2016 is reasonable. Future projections will need to rely on data occurring under the actual conditions of WIOA.

(l) State Goals and Priorities:

- (1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

This does not apply to ICBVI. The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) falls under a Commission of 5 Board Members (ICBVI Board) who are appointed by the Governor of Idaho.

- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs;
- (3) Ensure the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - a. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - b. The State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and
 - c. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program.

The following goals are based on the analysis of the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment completed in 2014 with priorities developed for FY 2014-2017 period; the agency's performance on standards and indicators; input from consumers, advocates, providers and other stakeholders. The following identifies our three major goals which are:

- (1) Increase Independence and Employment Outcomes through quality rehabilitation services.

ICBVI will implement the following strategies:

- Work with Transition youth at the start of high school to foster the development of ongoing transition planning and services specifically connecting School Districts throughout the State.
 - ICBVI will meet or exceed the required federal indicators.
 - Emphasize the use of work incentives from Social Security Administration that promotes the transition of dependence on benefits to the independence of part or full time employment.
 - Provide ongoing staff training to insure qualified professional staff knowledgeable in blindness, visual impairments as well as secondary disabilities; counseling techniques, vocational rehabilitation, community and secondary transition.
 - Conduct Assistive Technology Assessments where needed.
- (2) Increase public and client awareness of the mission, purpose, goals, function and services of the agency.

ICBVI will implement the following strategies:

- Specific outreach methods to reach identified groups: ophthalmologists; tribal 121 programs and School District personnel.
 - Continue recurring outreach activities to help minimize the effects of turnover in staff of organizations has on the organizational knowledge of ICBVI services.
 - Emphasize the specialized programs and services that ICBVI offers to the Blind and Visually Impaired.
 - Continue to utilize the current staff in nontraditional roles to increase client access to training and technology.
- (3) Increase training availability, effectiveness and access for clients.

ICBVI will implement the following strategies:

- Continue flexible time frames to ATC schedule to better accommodate clients rehabilitation needs.

- Develop additional materials to better communicate to clients about the purposes for and preparation needs to participate in ICBVI trainings.
- Work with Consumer Groups, Clients and Secondary Transition Partners to increase the effectiveness of the “Summer Work Experience Program” SWEP and “College Days” Programs offered at ICBVI. In FFY 2013, the SWEP Program was canceled due to the funding cuts related to sequestration. In FFY 2013, there were 8 individuals that participated in College Days, an increase of 2 from the previous year. In FFY 2015 there were 6 that participated in College Days and 14 that participated in SWEP. ICBVI anticipates up to 20 participants for each of these programs in FFY2016.

(m) Order of Selection:

ICBVI is currently not under an Order of Selection

(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds

- (1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.
- (2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including :
 - a. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and
 - b. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

ICBVI receives only 1% or \$3,000 of the \$300,000 allotted to the state of Idaho for Community Supported Employment (CSE). This funding amount may cover the upfront training costs for one to three individuals. In Idaho there are not any long-term support funds for clients with visual impairments only, so given these circumstances and the fact that most people requiring CSE are individuals with multiple disabilities, ICBVI counselors collaborate with their peers in the general agency to insure that clients receive the appropriate services. ICBVI has and will continue to support clients that need supported employment level services through the basic support grant during the active VR case and work with community partners, families, and other organizations to develop long term support or natural supports whenever feasible.

(o) State’s Strategies:

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

- (1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Statewide Assistive Technologist to the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This strategy is designed to streamline Assistive Technology assessments and trainings for Vocational Rehabilitation clients. To increase accessibility in all the offices in the state which were either remodeled or relocated.

(2) How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis:

- Conduct an assessment of blindness skills on all VR clients to determine their level of competence with the alternative skills of blindness.
- Continue implementing training curricula and timelines for clients to learn how to best utilize their Assistive Technology devices.
- Utilize loaner system and increase the number of models of adaptive technology for clients to try out before we purchase items.
- Utilize our Boise location for easier customer access to the Low Vision Clinic, VR Counselors and Rehab Teachers. Also for training in the ATC where clients can use our onsite dorm rooms.
- Utilize computer stations for clients to practice on and complete homework assignments while attending the ATC.
- Continue membership in the Chamber of Commerce statewide.

(3) The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

ICBVI will work collaboratively with the Native American Indian Tribes that reside within the State to identify methods to better communicate the mission, goals, purpose and programs of ICBVI, and to identify processes to better facilitate referrals into ICBVI programs as well as implementation and completion of programs for employment outcomes.

ICBVI will work collaboratively with Department of Labor and the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs to identify methods to better communicate the mission, goals, purpose and programs of ICBVI, and to identify processes to better facilitate referrals into ICBVI programs as well as implementation and completion of programs for employment outcomes.

ICBVI will continue to collaborate with Department of Education to insure that transition age students are made aware of ICBVI services and how to access them. This is occurring at a State level with ICBVI's involvement in the Interagency Transition Council as well as regional level where the VR counselors are in direct communication with individual school staff.

ICBVI will continue to strengthen its collaborative work with Idaho Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESDB).

(4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

ICBVI is committed to working collaboratively with the IESDB, IDVR, and all regional school districts to identify all eligible (or potentially eligible) secondary students in the state of Idaho.

Furthermore, ICBVI is committed to reaching out to rural communities in this effort.

ICBVI currently has two summer programs that are target towards high school students: 1) School to Work Experience Program (SWEPE) and, 2) College Days. Curriculum in both of these programs is being reviewed and modified, as appropriate, to ensure they meet all of the criteria of PETS under WIOA. Additionally, both of these programs will be expanded to include more participants.

- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

N/A

- (6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

ICBVI has no baseline data from which to determine whether performance is degrading, maintaining or improving per 116 standards. Once regulatory guidance is issued to determine exactly what variables will inform section 116 performance accountability measures, and once an understanding of these baselines emerge, IDVR will be well positioned to develop strategies to improve upon these yet to be determined outcomes.

The Division is currently working with core partner agencies to establish the open exchange of information which surround these performance measures, and is attempting to predict and establish baselines for negotiation with RSA based upon existing data. However, since the core group of people we serve will fundamentally shift as we implement WIOA, the error introduced into these predictions is unknown.

ICBVI will continue to:

- Increase outreach to all eligible Idahoans.
- Continue working with high school transition students earlier to evaluate potential assistive technology needs and employment goals as they transition from school to the adult world of work.
- Emphasize jobs with higher wages.
- Emphasize upfront counseling and guidance.
- Emphasize functional evaluations.
- Fully implement upgraded computerized case management system to provide more effective data for evaluation of progress and outcomes.
- Provide intense training on blindness and visual impairments to new VRC staff.
- Provide training in effective Case Management to new VRCs if needed.
- Provide one to one mentoring and team mentoring to new VR staff to increase effectiveness.

- (7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The WIOA Advisory Group, in conjunction with the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has agreed that both ICBVI and IDVR will be lead agencies in addressing the continuing education and technical assistance needs of external workforce partners in best serving individuals with disabilities. ICBVI and IDVR will jointly sponsor a yearly needs assessment of workforce partners regarding employment and disability. This collaboration will include the establishment of stand-alone informational products, tailored face-to-face trainings and informal consultation as needed.

ICBVI will continue to work with Department of Labor and the One-Stop System in checking accessibility for Blind and Visually Impaired. Continue to encourage ICBVI's clients to visit the One-Stops or use the online Idaho Works System, and continue to coordinate and collaborate with the staff at the Department of Labor to assist ICBVI in securing employment opportunities for our clients being served in our Summer Work Experience Program as well as providing job readiness training.

(8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:

a. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The agency's goals and priorities have been outline in section (l): state goals and priorities. This section (o) has addressed the program specific strategies to achieve the goals and priorities. This information in concert with the initiatives laid out in the combined plan operational elements precisely addresses how the State will approach these priorities.

b. support innovation and expansion activities; and

The Commission's strategies to support innovation and expansion activities have been outlined above in section (o)(1).

c. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

Sections (o)(3) and (o) (4) of the Commission's program specific strategies (contained above) further elaborate on how the ICBVI will address equitable access and participation as it relates to this section.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals:

(1) An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

a. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

Goal 1 - Increase Independence and Employment Outcomes through Quality Rehabilitation Services.

- Passed Standards and Indicators for FFY 2015.
- The ICBVI's Assistive Technologist continues to maintain consistent monthly contact providing direct client assessments. Continued e-mail/telephone consultation with Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI).
- Continued training of VR staff in order to provide needed services to clients with benefits.
- Regional meetings which include VR staff from both agencies, and School District staff, which are held every other year, last one was completed in September 2013.

Goal 2 - Increase public and client awareness of the mission, purpose, goals, function and services of the agency.

- Ongoing development of staff who are required to provide a set number of outreach activities per year to increase public and client awareness. This staff requirement has been effective as it makes outreach a priority for all staff.
- ICBVI will continue to collaborate and coordinate with Native American tribes within the state of Idaho. Example: ICBVI will held regional low vision clinics in Twin Falls, Lewiston, and Coeur d'Alene providing services for the underserved populations.
- ICBVI continues to work with regional transportation officials on transportation issues that affect people with blindness and other disabilities.

Goal 3 - Increase training availability, effectiveness and access for clients.

- The ATC has continued to offer part-time flexible schedules to students attending to accommodate their rehabilitation needs.
- Continue to develop additional materials to better communicate to clients about the purpose and need to participate in ATC trainings.
- The agency is on track for FFY 2016 to hold a College Days program for one week, and also a SWEP program for 6 weeks.

b. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

N/A

(2) An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

- a. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- b. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Goal: To maintain current levels of supported employment service provision and performance.

Due to the 1% or \$3,000 CSE budget allotted to ICBVI, the agency has collaborated with the general agency to serve clients with CSE needs. This has been a successful strategy. The impediment has been in demand for CSE services statewide which has exceeded budget amounts.

(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

This plan is filed at a transitional period for standards and indicators in vocational evaluation. The Combined State Plan addresses traditional standards and indicators which were required throughout FFY 2015.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

ICBVI's specific Innovation and Expansion (I&E) strategy for FFY 2016 is to continue the project of a Statewide Assistive Technologist to the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This strategy is

designed to streamline Assistive Technology assessments and trainings for Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services:

- (1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported employment services are provided to our blind or visually impaired clients who have multiple disabilities, who have the most significant disabilities, who are consequently are eligible to receive community supported employment services. These multiple disabilities include developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and mental illness or a combination of these disabilities. CSE services are provided by the community rehabilitation programs which are accredited by CARF or RSAS. Services include assessment, job site development, job coaching, and communication with the employers. ICBVI and IDVR provide the upfront training until the clients are stabilized on their jobs and at that point they are transferred to the long-term support services through Health and Welfare HCBS waiver or the IDVR Extended Employment Program.

- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.

The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates Extended Employment Services (EES) for ICBVI.