New England

Vocational Rehabilitation

Quality Assurance System

Improving Service Delivery for Competitive Employment

The Performance, Evaluation and Quality Assurance Working Group:

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont

7/15/14

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# Introduction

The Performance Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA) Working Group represents staff responsible for quality assurance, performance management and program evaluation in the six vocational rehabilitation (VR) Region 1 member agencies. These six Region 1 VR agencies represent the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, which constitute the New England VR Collaborative.

Working with the support and technical assistance of the New England (Region 1) Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center, the PEQA working group collaborated on the creation of a reference resource to reflect and guide performance management, evaluation, and quality assurance activities of member agencies.  Based on collaborative discussion and research, the TACE Region 1 PEQA group arrived at a resource centered on seven core principles that address key issues in performance management, program evaluation and quality assurance.

These principles are based on two key resources; the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues 2011 publication “Performance Management: Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance in Vocational Rehabilitation”, and Dr. W. Edwards Deming’s work on Continuous Quality Improvement (Deming, 1982)*.*  The principles also reflect the knowledge and experience of contributing professionals from the TACE Region 1 member agencies.

The seven principles are outlined below with corresponding definitions, elements, best practices, and graphical illustrations of interrelationships with other principles. This is followed by a brief discussion and illustration of the overall interrelationships between the core principles.  A glossary of acronyms and a brief references section are also included. This document is intended as a practical and easily accessible resource for professionals, and is a collaborative work in progress.

# New England Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance System Model

A graphic that shows each core component in it's own circle, with the New England Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance System locate in the middle of all 7 core components.  The 7 compenents are:
1.  Communication of Mission and Values
2.  Organizational Goals, Objectives, and Timelines
3.  Measures
4.  Program Evaluation Data Systems
5. Analysis of Data
6.  Dissemination
7. Cycle of Continuous Improvement

# Communication of Mission and Values

## – DEFINITION

The **mission** is the primary goal or task of the organization, **vision** is the image of what successful implementation of that goal would look like, and **values** are the principles that the mission and vision are based on.

## – ELEMENTS

### 1.2a Communication Mechanisms

The mission, vision and values are:

* Identified on public documents, web sites, and intranets;
* Included in the Strategic Plan which is distributed to staff, SRC, employers and stakeholders; and
* Exemplified by consumer success stories.

### 1.2b Operating Principles

The mission, vision and values are supported and reinforced through:

* Training to staff and supervisors, especially newly hired or promoted staff;
* Agreed upon definitions of terms in the mission/vision/values statements;
* Alignment with the guiding regulations, procedures, and processes of the organization; and
* Operational roles and responsibilities that are clearly defined.

## 1.3 – BEST PRACTICES

* Staff, consumers, SRC members, employers, and other community partners and stakeholders are able to verbalize the mission, vision, and values and understand the relationship of those statements to the daily work of the organization.
* The Strategic Plan is developed with input from the state SRC and staff and is directed at meeting the needs of all stakeholders.
* Staff members at all levels are conversant in the strategic focus of the organization and how they contribute to the organization’s success.

# Organizational Goals, Objectives, and Timelines

## – DEFINITION

The [objectives](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/objective.html), goals, purpose and [mission](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mission.html) of an organization are [established](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/establish.html) by its [management](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/management.html) and communicated to all members. The desired [long](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/long-position.html) -term goals [provide](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/provide.html) guidance for employees on their work and can be translated into practical and measurable short- term objectives and timelines.

## – ELEMENTS

### 2.2a Planning

* The development and refinement of Agency planning is a regular, ongoing part of Agency operations and is centered around**:**
  + The Agency Strategic Plan;
  + The State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation;
  + The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment;
  + SRC advocacy and advice;
  + Stakeholder input; and
  + RSA monitoring and technical assistance.
* Objectives should link to Program Improvement Plans, Corrective Action Plans, and Individualized Performance Goals (Area Office, Counselor, District, etc.).

### 2.2b Organizational Structure

* The Agency Strategic Plan should be multilevel and should be implemented using a project management approach outlining the objectives, those who are responsible, timeframes, and next steps.
* The Strategic Plan clearly defines roles and responsibilities based on the Agency organizational structure. Specific tasks are assigned to specific staff.

### 2.2c Internal Monitoring and Controls

* Regular checkpoints are built into the Agency’s activities to monitor progress on goals and objectives on an ongoing basis (i.e., quarterly/monthly monitoring of benchmarks).
* Agency leadership and key stakeholders are updated on a regular basis on progress, goals and objectives.
* Fiscal and Programmatic activity is guided by the Agency’s Internal Control Plan.

## – BEST PRACTICES

* The Agency is driven by multilevel, comprehensive strategic planning which clearly defines the Agency’s performance goals and key objectives based upon the Agency’s mission, vision, and values.
* The Strategic Plan is the “Road Map” for the Agency, and includes clearly stated objectives with measureable outcomes, with set timelines and priorities, and measures to progress achievement towards goals.
* The plan is developed with all stakeholders and clearly outlines responsibility for implementation and measurement of progress at all levels.

# Measures

## – DEFINITION

The tools, methods, and processes that are used to quantify and assess past, ongoing, and future goals, actions, and results.

## ELEMENTS

### 3.2a Outcome Measures (examples)

* Number of successful employment outcomes;
* Rehabilitation Rate;
* Minority Indicator;
* Primary Support;
* Average earnings;
* Wages/state wages comparison;
* Cost of services & outcomes;
* Consumer needs (assessment of);
* Consumer satisfaction (number and percent);
* Employer satisfaction (number and percent);
* Employer needs & jobs filled;
* Provider satisfaction;
* Staff needs and satisfaction; and
* Stakeholder satisfaction.

### 3.2b Process Measures (examples)

* 60-day eligibility determination;
* Change in level of education;
* Time to develop IPE;
* Time between Status 12 (IPE Written) and initial service provision;
* Length of time in Status 20 (Ready for Employment);
* Frequency of contact/case notes;
* Annual Review of IPE;
* Effectiveness of CRP services;
* The identification of consumers who are underserved;
* Overdue/outstanding authorizations/fiscal commitments; and
* Number of referrals from various referral sources (i.e. Transition; CRPs; DD agencies, etc.).

## – BEST PRACTICES

* A performance management system for a VR Agency includes a broad range of measures, including outcome and process measures, which are used to indicate interim progress and end results.
* Measures are aligned with program goals and feasible to implement.
* Measures are simple; they can be properly understood and implemented effectively.
* Measures include consumer characteristics.

# Program Evaluation Data Systems

## – DEFINITION

Evaluation Data Systems are system(s) used by organizations to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The data system allows for the validation and retrieval of data for evaluation, analysis, and reporting.

## – ELEMENTS

### 4.2a Case Management Systems

Program evaluation and data systems are:

* Systems that collect and store Agency data for analysis and reporting to RSA, SRC members, staff, consumers, other community partners and stakeholders;
* Tools that support the work of staff, consumers, community rehabilitation providers, employers, and others; and
* Designed to provide multilevel access to data based on role and responsibility.

### 4.2b Operating Principles

Program Evaluation Data Systems are supported and reinforced through:

* Agency established monitoring and audit procedures such as case reviews, satisfaction surveys, vendor reviews, etc.;
* Alignment with the regulations, policy, procedures, and processes that guide the organization; and
* Agency staff training based on operational roles and responsibilities.

## – BEST PRACTICES

* Data management system reliably stores Agency data and readily allows data preparation for analysis.
* The system includes data validation procedures.
* It allows for integrated data sets that enable more extensive analysis.
* There are effective security protocols, roles, and rules.
* A data dashboard is provided that relays data at the user level.

# Analysis of the Data

## – DEFINITION

The process of transforming data into a usable and reportable form, such as a briefing, or analytical article, in order to add meaning and value to the output of data collection tools and methods, and to inform quality improvement. Analysis provides critical perspective for recorded data, allowing for trends, projections and comparisons, and is an essential function of performance management and quality assurance.

## – ELEMENTS

### 5.2a Operating Principles

* Use collected data! Data is important to analyze program effectiveness and incorporate into strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts.
* A typical analysis includes the periodic calculation of a statistic, such as a frequency count or an average that can be graphed or charted to reveal progress toward reaching a goal or objective, as well as a trend line developed showing progress over time.
* Specific questions should be established to guide and dictate the analysis.
* Allot time to analyze the data collected. Dedicate staff to this task.
* If questions cannot be answered because the data required to answer the question do not exist, evaluate your need for additional data elements.
* Sophisticated analyses do not make up for poor data.

### 5.2b Communication Mechanisms

* Understand the audience – ensure that information dissemination is targeted towards recipients.
* Communicate to all levels of staff regarding what data is collected, why it is necessary and how it will be used – instill value in accuracy and completeness of data entry.

## BEST PRACTICES

* + Validate Data (to extent possible) for correctness and completeness.
  + Develop specific questions to aid in the analysis of data. What are you trying to understand?
  + Re-evaluate collection of data periodically to ensure that what is collected is valuable to the program.
  + Maintain awareness of developments and enhancements regarding analytic and statistical software, tools, methods and best practices as they relate to VR performance management, including staff training and professional development.
  + Develop and maintain working relationships with Information Technology and other information system development staff to ensure the successful implementation and enhancement of web based information systems that allow for effective and ongoing analysis.

# Dissemination

## – DEFINITION

Dissemination refers to the communication of results to specific audiences (e.g., counselors, staff, SRC members, CRPs, policy makers, etc.). Dissemination of the quality assurance process assists the Agency in becoming more efficient, improving services, eliminating mistakes, and most importantly, raising the level of services to the internal as well as external customers. Dissemination assists stakeholders in making more informed decisions that ultimately lead to improved consumer outcomes.

## – ELEMENTS

### 6.2a Stakeholder Specific

* The dissemination plan should assure that the right information is provided to the right people.
* Reports and other dissemination strategies should assure that content is understandable and reporting formats are appropriate for the intended users.
* Need for information should be considered when determining frequency of provision.

### 6.2b Communication Plan

* Develop a plan that outlines the strategies which will be used to communicate the information and results obtained. The plan:
  + Should be clearly defined;
  + Consistently performed;
  + Use multiple mechanisms;
  + Take into consideration the purpose of the communication; and
  + Be accessible to different users (appropriate language and format).

### 6.2c Support Use

* The goal of all dissemination should be utilization. Assess the reason for dissemination, e.g., awareness, understanding or action and choose dissemination strategy that addresses the need of the target audience.
* Where possible engage intended users in the evaluation process. Consider how support will be provided in the use of the information and results. Offer opportunity to thoroughly digest and fit the new information with prior understandings and experience.

### 6.2d Tools for dissemination (examples)

* Written quality assurance methodology, procedure and manuals
* Strategic Plan;
* State Plan;
* Needs assessment;
* Publications / release of information to stakeholders;
* Internet / Intranet;
* Data Reporting;
* Consumer satisfaction survey report;
* Other needs/satisfaction survey (e.g., staff) reports;
* Training/Technical Assistance activities and events; and
* Mailing lists /ListServs/social media.

## – BEST PRACTICES

* Dissemination practices should assure that all staff have a clear and consistent understanding of the Agency’s quality assurance approaches.
* The Agency has a clearly defined and shared dissemination strategy that:
* is thorough and timely;
* addresses identified problems;
* analyzes successes for replication of approach;
* tracks standards and reports results on a regular schedule;
* provides the information needed to people who can take action;
* tailors reports according to the stakeholder audience; and
* identifies the time frame and appropriate format for reporting.
* Findings are developed and presented in ways that are useful for the intended users and supported to make use of the information.
* The information provided includes details of content, context, and resources needed before implementation can be planned in sufficient detail (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1989; Pollard, 1989; Mace-Matluck, 1986; Fullan, 1985).
* The Agency stays up to date with current developments in dissemination tools, technology and practices.

# Cycle of Continuous Improvement

## – DEFINITION

A developmental and routine process, which supports an evolving Strategic Plan based upon ongoing information-gathering, analysis, and actions. Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes. Among the most widely used tools for continuous improvement is a four-step quality model—the [plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle](http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/project-planning-tools/overview/pdca-cycle.html), also known as the Deming Cycle:

* **Plan:** Identify an opportunity and plan for change.
* **Do:** Implement the change on a small scale.
* **Check:** Use data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.
* **Act:** If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale and continuously assess your results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again

## ELEMENTS

### 7.2A Communications Mechanisms

Information gathering and dissemination are transparent activities that are communicated through multiple internal and external means, including verbal and written documents, reports and behavior.

### 7.2b Operating Principles

Continuous improvement is an expectation and a requirement of everyone in the organization. Follow the Plan-Do-Check-Act process. The essence of continuous improvement lies in employee involvement.

## – BEST PRACTICES

* Continuous improvement is integral to the organizational culture at all levels of the organization.
* Changes are not made without stakeholder input, including consumers, families, SRC, VR staff, employers, and community partners.
* Goals are analyzed and revised in the context of mission and values.
* Policy and procedural changes occur in the cycle, but are well considered and implemented strategically and systematically.
* Project management mindset and tools support continuous improvement activities with clearly defined purpose, time parameters and deliverables.
* Success is celebrated.

# Interrelationships of Core Principles

The following diagram illustrates the interrelationships of the seven core principles of the New England VR Quality Assurance System.



All seven core principles are closely related to each other in many different ways. Each aspect of every principle impacts every element of each component and the overall quality assurance system. (See Appendix A.) For example, clearly defined measures need to be in place in order to measure progress towards Agency goals and objectives defined in the Agency’s Strategic Plan. A program evaluation data system is necessary in order to conduct analysis and quantify data to assess progress in the measures, and so on. Every piece is tied to and dependent on the others.

Therefore, a quality assurance system needs each of these elements to be in place in order to function in a manner allowing the VR Agency to operate a program providing the highest level of quality services to its consumers and stakeholders. Incorporation of the core components varies by state and each state is encouraged to conduct a self-assessment of their VR Quality Assurance System to further develop their current system. (See Appendix B.)

# Acronyms

**CQI:** Continuous Quality Improvement

**CRP:** Community Rehabilitation Program

**DOE:** Department of Education

**IPE:** Individualized Plan for Employment

**PEQA:** Performance, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance

**QA:** Quality Assurance

**RSA:** Rehabilitation Services Administration

**SRC:** State Rehabilitation Council

**TACE:** Technical Assistance & Continuing Education Center

**VR:** Vocational Rehabilitation

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# Appendix A: Core Component Interrelationships

Successfully implementing a QA System will include recognizing and managing interrelated processes as a system. The Interrelationship Table (Appendix A) discusses how components within the Quality Assurance System are related to the other components.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Core Component 1**  Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision, Values | **Core Component 2**  Organizational Goals, Objectives and Timelines | **Core Component 3**  Measures | **Core Component 4**  Program Evaluation Data Systems | **Core Component 5**  Analysis of Data | **Core Component 6**  Dissemination | **Core Component 7**  Cycle of Continuous Improvement |
| 1:1  Comparing Component 1 to other components | 1:2  •Organizational performance goals and objectives are part of the Strategic Plan and evolve from the mission, vision and values. | 1:3  •Measures are clearly linked to the goals and priorities of the State Plan, federal and state requirements and to outcomes and objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.  \*Measures support the mission, vision and values of the organization. | 1:4  •The data systems support data management and analyses of progress toward the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.  •The data systems help to align performance with the expectations of the mission, vision and values of the organization. | 1:5  •The analysis of data informs the development of the Strategic Plan.  •The analysis of data demonstrates progress toward the goals and objectives and the alignment to the mission, vision and values of the organization. | 1:6  •Dissemination provides for sharing the mission, vision and values of the organization to strategic audiences using various communication mechanisms and strategies. | 1:7  •Continuous improvement activities use data analysis and reporting to review and revise goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and to develop program improvements. which support the Agency’s mission, vision and values. |

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| **Core Component Interrelationships** | | | | | | |
| **Core Component 1**  Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision, Values | **Core Component 2**  Organizational Goals, Objectives and Timelines | **Core Component 3**  Measures | **Core Component 4**  Program Evaluation Data Systems | **Core Component 5**  Analysis of Data | **Core Component 6**  Dissemination | **Core Component 7**  Cycle of Continuous Improvement |
| 2:1  (as component 1 was compared with component 2 in the previous chart, see 1:2 above for the narrative comparison) | 2:2  Comparing Component 2 to other components | 2:3  •The measures used for assessing Agency performance and progress are linked to the goals, objectives and outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan, State Plan, and other key guiding documents. | 2:4  •The Agency’s data systems captures important data necessary to both inform the development of and measurement of progress towards strategic objectives and goals.  •The data systems are built to provide important data to Agency staff on all levels ranging from the counselor level to the statewide level about progress on goals and objectives. | 2:5  •Analysis of data is a critical component which informs the development of the Agency Strategic Plan, State Plan, and overall goals and objectives.  •Ongoing analysis of data allows for the monitoring of progress towards Agency goals and objectives and allows for refinement of Agency goals and objectives as needed. | 2:6  •Dissemination to staff on all levels, consumers, the SRC, and all other key stakeholders provides the necessary information to the appropriate parties to allow for the work of the Agency to be focused on activities that support the goals and objectives and for the evaluation of progress on organizational goals and objectives. | 2:7  •The cycle of continuous improvement means that key data points or benchmarks are regularly compiled, reported and analyzed to inform the Strategic Plan, goals, objectives and timelines. |

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| **Core Component Interrelationships** | | | | | | |
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| 3:1  (as component 1 was compared with component 3 in a previous chart, see 1:3 above for the narrative comparison) | 3:2  (as component 2 was compared with component 3 in a previous chart, see 2:3 above for the narrative comparison) | 3:3  Comparing Component 3 to other components | 3:4  •Data systems gather and collect the necessary measures.  •The system is designed to accurately collect and organize the necessary data in a useful format for analysis and reporting by staff at a statewide, regional and caseload view. | 3:5  •Selection of appropriate measures provides accurate, applicable data for use in analyzing Agency performance, staff performance and quality of services.  •Quality of the data analyzed is dependent upon accuracy of the measures. | 3:6  •Agency communications to staff and stakeholders contain clear information on the measures to inform staff and stakeholders on Agency, staff and stakeholders’ performance.  •Measures provide required data for federal and state oversight.  •Written methodology/quality assurance procedure documents and manuals help staff and other key parties understand the relationship of measures to the organization’s mission, goals and objectives. | 3:7  •Using same measures over time provides a long-term picture of performance, allowing for decisions to be made that lead to continuous improvement.  •Adding interim/additional measures can provide supplementary information to gauge short-term progress towards goals, objectives and priorities.  •Data that is collected is valuable in understanding Agency performance and subsequently improving it.  •Degree of complexity of the data, analysis and reporting is based upon the need of the continuous improvement activity. |

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| **Core Component Interrelationships** | | | | | | |
| **Core Component 1**  Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision, Values | **Core Component 2**  Organizational Goals, Objectives and Timelines | **Core Component 3**  Measures | **Core Component 4**  Program Evaluation Data Systems | **Core Component 5**  Analysis of Data | **Core Component 6**  Dissemination | **Core Component 7**  Cycle of Continuous Improvement |
| 4:1  (as component 1 was compared with component 4 in a previous chart, see 1:4 above for the narrative comparison) | 4:2  (as component 2 was compared with component 4 in a previous chart, see 2.4 above for the narrative comparison) | 4:3  (as component 3 was compared with component 4 in a previous chart, see 3:4 above for the narrative comparison) | 4:4  Comparing Component 4 to other components | 4:5  •Data validation and reliability support the analysis of the data used in decision making, dissemination to stakeholders and Agency progress towards goals and objectives derived from the Agency Strategic Plan.  •Data systems support data management and analyses of progress toward the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. | 4:6  •Timely communication and dissemination of program evaluation results derived from data collection, and analysis, tailored to various stakeholders provides ongoing assessment of progress toward the goals and objectives. | 4:7  •The program evaluation data system provides ongoing data for analysis which promotes a cycle of continuous quality improvement and program development related to the agencies Strategic Plan and goals and objectives. |

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| **Core Component Interrelationships** | | | | | | |
| **Core Component 1**  Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision, Values | **Core Component 2**  Organizational Goals, Objectives and Timelines | **Core Component 3**  Measures | **Core Component 4**  Program Evaluation Data Systems | **Core Component 5**  Analysis of Data | **Core Component 6**  Dissemination | **Core Component 7**  Cycle of Continuous Improvement |
| 5:1  (as component 1 was compared with component 5 in a previous chart, see 1:5 above for the narrative comparison) | 5:2  (as component 2 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 2:5 above for the narrative comparison) | 5:3  (as component 3 was compared with component 5 in a previous chart, see 3:5 above for the narrative comparison) | 5:4  (as component 4 was compared with component 5 in a previous chart, see 4:5 above for the narrative comparison) | 5:5  Comparing Component 5 to other components | 5:6  •Reports on data analysis that demonstrates progress toward the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan are tailored to fit the various audiences.  •Provides strategies to share information and reports so that data that is collected can be analyzed and used effectively. | 5:7  •Data analysis and reports are used to revise goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan and to develop program improvements/development.  •The analysis of data informs the development of the Strategic Plan.  •The analysis of data is clearly communicated to staff, the SRC and community partners/stakeholders in a way that demonstrates progress toward the goals and objectives and the alignment to the mission, vision and values of the organization. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Core Component Interrelationships** | | | | | | |
| **Core Component 1**  Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision, Values | **Core Component 2**  Organizational Goals, Objectives and Timelines | **Core Component 3**  Measures | **Core Component 4**  Program Evaluation Data Systems | **Core Component 5**  Analysis of Data | **Core Component 6**  Dissemination | **Core Component 7**  Cycle of Continuous Improvement |
| 6:1  (as component 1 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 1:6 above for the narrative comparison)) | 6:2  (as component 2 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 2:6 above for the narrative comparison)  . | 6:3  (as component 3 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 3:6 above for the narrative comparison) | 6:4  (as component 4 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 4:6 above for the narrative comparison) | 6:5  (as component 5 was compared with component 6 in a previous chart, see 5:6 above for the narrative comparison) | 6:6  Comparing Component 6 to other components | 6.7  •Provides information to necessary parties in order to effectively revise plans, goals, and objectives.  •Provides a vehicle for communicating effective practices and procedures.  •Dissemination shares answers to continuous improvement questions, which then prompts new questions for further improvement.  •Dissemination makes organizations accountable and forward moving. |
| 7:1  (For narrative comparison see 1:7 above) | 7:2  (For narrative comparison see 2:7 above) | 7:3  (For narrative comparison see 3:7 above) | 7:4  (For narrative comparison see 4:7 above) | 7:5  (For narrative comparison see 5:7 above) | 7:6  (For narrative comparison see 6:7 above) | 7:7  Comparing Component 7 to other components |

Appendix B – Agency Self-Assessment Tool Template

**(**Name of State**) VR Quality Assurance System Plan**

| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision and Values** | Staff, consumers, SRC members, employers, and other community partners and stakeholders are able to verbalize the mission, vision, and values and understand the relationship of those statements to the daily work of the organization. |  |  |  |  |
| The Strategic Plan is developed with input from the state SRC and staff and is directed at meeting the needs of all stakeholders. |  |  |  |  |
| Staff members at all levels are conversant in the strategic focus of the organization and how they contribute to the organization’s success. |  |  |  |  |
| Agency Added Practices: |  |  |  |  |

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| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Organizational Goals, Objectives, and Timelines** | The Agency is driven by multilevel, comprehensive strategic planning which clearly defines the Agency’s performance goals and key objectives based upon the Agency’s mission, vision, and values. |  |  |  |  |
| The Strategic Plan is the “Road Map” for the Agency, and includes clearly stated objectives with measureable outcomes, with set timelines and priorities, and measures to progress achievement towards goals. |  |  |  |  |
| The plan is developed with all stakeholders and clearly outlines responsibility for implementation and measurement of progress at all levels. |  |  |  |  |
| Agency Added Practices: |  |  |  |  |

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| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Measures** | A performance management system for a VR Agency includes a broad range of measures, including outcome and process measures, which are used to indicate interim progress and end results. |  |  |  |  |
| Measures are aligned with program goals and feasible to implement. |  |  |  |  |
| Measures are simple; they can be properly understood and implemented effectively. |  |  |  |  |
| Measures include consumer characteristics. |  |  |  |  |
|  | Agency Added Practices: |  |  |  |  |

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| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Program Evaluation Data Systems** | Data management system reliably stores Agency data and readily allows data preparation for analysis. |  |  |  |  |
| The system includes data validation procedures. |  |  |  |  |
| It allows for integrated data sets that enable more extensive analysis. |  |  |  |  |
| There are effective security protocols, roles, and rules. |  |  |  |  |
|  | A data dashboard is provided that relays data at the user level. |  |  |  |  |
|  | Agency Added Practices: |  |  |  |  |

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| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | | | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | | **Time Period** | | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Analysis of Data** | Validate data (to extent possible) for correctness and completeness. | | |  | |  | |  |  |
| Develop specific questions to aid in the analysis of data. What are you trying to understand? | | |  | |  | |  |  |
| Re-evaluate collection of data periodically to ensure that what is collected is valuable to the program. | | |  | |  | |  |  |
| Maintain awareness of developments and enhancements regarding analytic and statistical software, tools, methods and best practices as they relate to VR performance management, including staff training and professional development. | | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Develop and maintain working relationships with Information Technology and other information system development staff to ensure the successful implementation and enhancement of web based information systems that allow for effective and ongoing analysis. | | |  | |  | |  |  |
|  | Agency Added Practices: | | |  | |  | |  |  |
| **QA System Component** | | | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | | **Time Period** | | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Dissemination** | | | Dissemination practices should assure that all staff have a clear and consistent understanding of the Agency’s quality assurance approaches. |  | |  | |  |  |
| The Agency has a clearly defined and shared dissemination strategy. |  | |  | |  |  |
| Findings are developed and presented in ways that are useful for the intended users and supported to make use of the information. |  | |  | |  |  |
| The information provided includes details of content, context, and resources needed before implementation can be planned in sufficient detail. |  | |  | |  |  |
| Developments in dissemination tools, technology and practices are kept up with. |  | |  | |  |  |
| Agency Added Practices: |  | |  | |  |  |
| **QA System Component** | | **Best Practices** | | | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Cycle of Continuous Improvement** | | Continuous improvement is integral to the organizational culture at all levels of the organization. | | |  | |  |  |  |
| Changes are not made without stakeholder input, including consumers, families, SRC, VR staff, employers, and community partners. | | |  | |  |  |  |
| Goals are analyzed and revised in the context of mission and values. | | |  | |  |  |  |
| Policy and procedural changes occur in the cycle, but are well considered and implemented strategically and systematically. | | |  | |  |  |  |
|  | | Project management mindset and tools support continuous improvement activities with clearly defined purpose, time parameters and deliverables. | | |  | |  |  |  |
|  | | Success is celebrated. | | |  | |  |  |  |
|  | | Agency Added Practices: | | |  | |  |  |  |

# Appendix B – Agency Self-Assessment Tool Example

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| **QA System Component** | **Best Practices** | **Activities/Tasks to Operationalize** | **Time Period** | **Staff Responsible** | **Additional Notes** |
| **Clearly Communicated Mission, Vision and Values** | Staff, consumers, SRC , employers, and other community stakeholders are able to verbalize the mission, vision and values and understand the relationship of those statements to daily work of organization. | 1. New counselor training 2. Annual staff retreat 3. Information in SRC binder 4. Mission/vision put on various publications | Ongoing | HR and Training Manager (Alicia)  Budget & Policy Manager (James) | Develop new logo that includes mission statement to use on all new publications. |
| The Strategic Plan is developed with input from SRC and staff and is directed at meeting the needs of all stakeholders. | 1. Strategic planning sessions held with all stakeholders 2. Annual State Plan and Needs Assessment used. | January – March annually | QA Manager (Susan) |  |
| Staff members at all levels are conversant in strategic focus of organization and how they contribute to the organization’s success. | 1. Review at annual staff retreat 2. Reinforce at appropriate meetings and in written documents | Ongoing | Director (Diane)  HR and Training Manager (Alicia) | Provide posters for district offices.  Make sure there is a standing agenda item for annual retreat. |
|  | Agency Added Practices: |  |  |  |  |