

# Staff Evaluation Approaches

Aligning with the Changes in the WIOA  
Common Performance Measures



*September 6, 2017*



# Presenters



Rachel Anderson, WINTAC  
[randerson@ndi-inc.org](mailto:randerson@ndi-inc.org)  
[rachel.anderson@wintac.org](mailto:rachel.anderson@wintac.org)



Kara Lang, Quality Control Specialist  
[kllang@nvdeetr.org](mailto:kllang@nvdeetr.org)



# Today's objectives

- The differences between new and old measures for the Vocational Rehabilitation program as it relates to staff evaluation
- The Common Performance Measures' impact regarding staff evaluation, training and skills
- Recommendations and ideas for performance evaluation goals and strategies used by States thus far
- Nevada's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Examples of goals and techniques for aligning CPM with Work Performance Standards

# What do the regulations say?

- The foundation of the VR program is the principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving high quality, competitive integrated employment when provided the necessary services and supports.
- To increase the employment of individuals with disabilities in the competitive integrated labor market, the workforce system must provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to participate in job-driven training and to pursue high quality employment outcomes.

*Page 55631 Federal Register*

# WIOA could change ...

- The type of skills necessary for VR Counselors
- What the agency wants to measure
- Focusing on quality vs. quantity
- The job duties for positions in the agency
- How VR agencies view and celebrate success
- Other

# Local considerations for evaluating performance

## Requirements

- Human Resources Department
- State or Public Agency
- Risk Management Department
- Organizational/Agency Expectations

## What aspects are within the VR Agency's control?

- What can and cannot be changed?

# What do you want to measure?

## Quality

- Is measuring quality difficult due to subjectivity?
- Does this require training and consistency?
- Do people view quality differently?

## Quantity

- Does your case management system allow you to gather the data?
- Does the focus need to shift or evolve?
- Can there be balance or flexibility?

Why did Nevada VR make the decision to amend their work performance standards now?



# Why do we evaluate performance?

To ensure that the goals of the organization are being accomplished by:

- Providing data upon which to fairly and effectively assess performance;
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and working relationships of each employee;
- Providing a method of self-measurement and a basis for a sense of achievement;
- Identifying necessary competencies and skills to align with organizational objectives; and
- Helping the employee to identify their own performance problems so they know when to ask for help.

# Things to consider: Standards

## Standards should be ...

- Concrete and specific
- Practical and easy to measure
- Meaningful
- Realistic
- Achievable
- Uniform for those performing identical jobs



What are some of the specific aspects of a VR Counselor's role that Nevada identified as needing to change?

# How do State VR Agencies currently evaluate counselor success?

Review of current SVRA performance standards

# Old VR standards and indicators

- 1.1: Change in employment from prior year -- at least 1 more than prior year
- 1.2: Rehab Rate: Target 55.8%
- 1.3: Competitive Employment Rate: Target 72.6%
- 1.4: Significant Disability Rate: 62.4%
- 1.5: Wage ratio: 52%
- 1.6: Increase in self-support: Target 53%
- 2.1: Equal access to services: .80 ratio

# Common performance themes

- Agency mission, vision and values
- Case management
- Professional development and teamwork
- Laws and regulations
- VR counseling and guidance
- 26 -- successful closures
- Varying levels of expectations
  - Dependent on position type and experience
- Full case reviews vs. random sample



# Examples: Eligibility

- Ensures compliance with federal criteria while determining client eligibility
- Determines eligibility within 60 days, or completes a signed extension
- Counselor determines eligibility within 60 days for all cases unless signed extensions and supporting documentation are obtained and produced in advance

# Examples: Community outreach

- Develops and maintains referral sources adequate enough to meet/exceed closure goals
- Fulfills liaison responsibilities with at least two contacts a year for each identified partner and documentation of these efforts
- Participates in at least one employer contact every six months
- Employee demonstrates the ability to engage and maintain two new substantial business accounts per fiscal year



## Example: Client contact and documentation

- Documents contact/service delivery at least every 90 days
- Counselor documents client activity or contacts as they occur according to client need
- Properly initiates (within 90 days of eligible status) and updates IPEs, and documents all paid service(s) being provided
- Demonstrates an understanding of the full range of processes as evidenced by timely and relevant case recording and documentation in accordance with agency policy

# Examples: Closures

- Counselor averages four successful client closures for each quarter and 16+ successful client outcomes for the fiscal year.
- Counselor earns a minimum of 28 successful closures during the evaluation year.
- Counselor will not close more unsuccessful (28) closures than successful closures (26) per year.

What were aspects of Nevada's current work performance standards that you knew needed to stay?

# How are State VR Agencies planning for evaluating counselor success under WIOA?

Review of SVRA performance standards examples

# New Common Performance Measures

1. Employment rate 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
2. Employment rate 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
3. Median earnings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
4. Credential attainment rate
5. Measurable skill gains
6. Effectiveness in serving employers



# WIOA performance themes

- Increase focus on quality and quantity
- Measure transition points along the way
- Emphasize training and education
- Measure long-term success
- Expect and encourage higher wages
- Continue focus on successful closures
- Collaborate between client and core partners

# WIOA-Specific areas of focus (not-exhaustive)

- Collaboration among team members, emphasizing core partners and business
- Successful closures = competitive integrated employment with expectations around wages, hours, benefits, etc.
- Increased number of eligibility determinations made within 30 days vs. 60-day requirement
- Client's career goals aligned with projected 20 high-demand careers for their region of the state
- General and Transition Counselors -- Maintenance of skill level in VR-identified competencies for counselors working with transition cases; Pre-ETS, potentially eligible, family engagement, IDEA, etc.



# Examples: Training, Career Pathways, long-term

- Percentage of clients who exit successfully in competitive integrated employment and are still working with that same employer 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit; and percentage of clients who are still working with that same employer 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit.
- Percentage of clients in training programs (IPE) are making progress toward a credential in the form of measurable skill gains.
- Percentage of participants who had an IPE and were in a training program who obtained a credential (as defined by federal regulations and agency policy) during the evaluation year.
- The number of measureable skill gains earned (as defined by federal regulations and agency policy) for all participants who had an IPE and credential goal during the evaluation year.



# Examples: Successful outcomes

## Raw number of individuals working:

- Total number of participants who exited in competitive integrated employment during the evaluation year; and
- Total number of participants employed in competitive integrated employment (including participation in survival and entry level jobs while working toward IPE career) during the evaluation year.

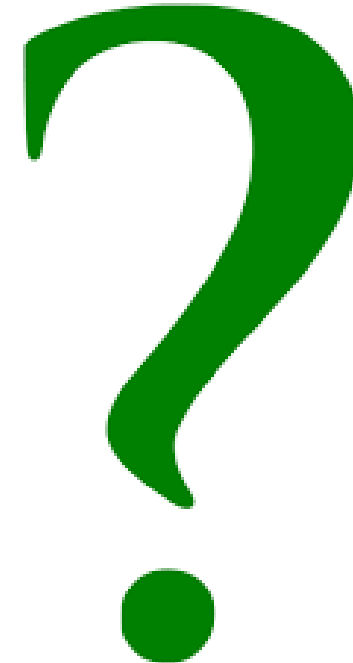
## While also expecting:

- The percentage of participants who exited with a successful competitive integrated employment outcome who were either earning at least \$15/hr. **or** working at least 35 hours per week.

# What may be missing from current evaluations?

## Limited focus on:

- Training or education
- Measuring transition points along the way
- Shared client and core partner collaboration
- Career Pathways
- Self-sustaining wages and hours
- Long-term success
- Post-Employment Services
- Other



What did Nevada VR identify as missing from their work performance standards that they knew they wanted to measure?

# SVRA strategies for implementing new performance standards for VR Counselors

What approaches are VR agencies taking?

# Nevada VR

Example: Work Performance  
Standards (WPS) & Scoring



# Nevada VR Mission Statement

To bring Nevadans together to promote barrier-free communities in which individual's with disabilities have equal access to opportunities for **quality work** and **self-sufficiency**.

# WPS goals and intent

## Large emphasis on:

- High Quality Jobs
  - Skill Development/Job-Driven Training
  - Earn Livable Wages
  - Long-Term Sustainable Employment
- Ability of participants to be as self-sufficient as possible in employment settings

# Back to the basics

- Educating participants -- helping them develop decision-making skills
- Assisting participants to explore both current and future needs
- Assisting participants to make long-term life style improvements
- Emphasizing informed choice, including:
  - Exploring pros and cons of decisions
  - Taking responsibility for decisions
- Providing opportunities for participants to learn from and move forward when mistakes are made



## We need to remember...

- Policies and federal regulations still need to be adhered to
- **JOBS** still count, even if the WIA standards and indicators have gone away
- WPS emphasizes **how** employment outcomes are achieved
- Focus has shifted to high quality, long-term careers
- VR's responsibility is ensuring opportunities are provided

# A cultural change ... beginning with WPS



- Change the underlying culture of assembly line style services in an attempt to accumulate large numbers of “26” closures



- Counselor effort and focus:
  - Ethical, high quality counseling services
  - Identifying good job matches
  - Achievement of long-term sustainable employment outcomes

# Old vs. New

## Old WPS (WIA)

1. Determination of eligibility
2. Counseling, determination of VR needs and IPE development
3. Case documentation, case and expenditure management
4. Employment outcomes
5. Customer satisfaction and professional conduct
6. Safety program

## New WPS (WIOA)

1. **Quality** of counseling and case documentation
2. **Quality** of vocational preparation, vocational goal, training and placement
3. **Quality** of case closures
4. Successful employment outcomes
5. Understanding, applying and documenting compliance with regulations, laws and policies
6. Customer satisfaction and professional conduct
7. Safety program

# WPS documents being reviewed

- Work Performance Standards
- Case Review Instrument
- Master Tabulation Form
  - Including an example
- Policy Acknowledgment Form

# WPS and Case Review Instrument (1 of 4)

## WPS Job Element #1

- **Quality** of Counseling Services and Case Documentation
- Weighted at 15%

## Case Review Instrument

- WPS Job Element #1 corresponds with the Case Review Question #1-9

# WPS and Case Review Instrument (2 of 4)

## WPS Job Element #2

- **Quality** of Vocational preparation, vocational goal, training, and placement
- Weighted at 20%

## Case Review Instrument

- WPS Job Element #2 corresponds with the Case Review Question #10-15

# WPS and Case Review Instrument (3 of 4)

## WPS Job Element #3

- **Quality** of case closures
- Weighted at 15%

## Case Review Instrument

- WPS Job Element #3 corresponds with the Case Review Question #16-22

# WPS and Case Review Instrument (4 of 4)

## WPS Job Element #5

- Understanding, applying and documenting compliance with regulations, laws and policies
- Weighted at 15%
- Policy Acknowledgment Form

## Case Review Instrument

- WPS Job Element #5 corresponds with the Case Review Question #23-40



# Case review evaluation scores

- **Meets Standards: 2.55 – 2.84**
  - Adjusted down from previous WPS (2.65 or 2.7)
  - 85% compliance
- **Exceeds Standards: 2.85 – 3.0**
  - Same as previous WPS
  - 95% compliance

# Case Review Tool

[illegible]

# WPS elements without case review (1 of 3)

- WPS Job Element #4
  - Successful Case Closures (26)
  - Weighted at 20%
- Meets Standard
  - 16-18 successful closures during evaluation year

## WPS elements without case review (2 of 3)

- WPS Job Element #6
  - Customer Satisfaction and Professional Conduct (DETR requirement)
  - Weighted at 14%
- Meets Standard
  - No more than 2 exceptions per year

## WPS elements without case review (3 of 3)

- WPS Job Element #7
  - Safety Program (DETR requirement)
  - Weighted at 1%
- Meets Standard
  - Every employee must comply with the State's workplace safety requirements.

We do not have all the answers.



But we are willing to TRY!

# Progress will not be linear

At times, we may need to:

- Pause
- Reflect
- Try
- Evaluate
- Learn
- Adapt
- Try Again
- Etc.



# The good news is we have time.

- Baseline numbers gathered over two years
- Provides us time to practice, learn, and grow
- Builds on steps we are taking now





# Training and support for counselors (and staff)

- Technical assistance will be provided for teams after Quality Assurance case reviews.
- Comprehensive training on new WPS and Case Review Instrument
- Perfection is not the goal. Progress is (attitude).

Does Nevada VR have any recommendations or lessons learned to share with other VR agencies considering taking this step?

Questions? Thank You!