



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

A proud partner of the



---

# **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Strategic Plan  
FFY2020 – 2023

---

[Page intentionally left blank]

## **Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Plan for FFY2020 – 2023**

The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), along with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC), continually assess the vocational rehabilitation needs of Alaskans with disabilities and the success of DVR in meeting those needs. DVR's strategic plan is a major component in continuous program evaluation and planning for the division in the adherence to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the associated regulations, 34 CFR Part 361.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

### **Principles**

DVR believes in:

- The empowering value of employment in an individual's life.
- Honoring and respecting each individual's strengths, skills, choices, abilities, and cultural identity.
- Developing strong partnerships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, schools, job centers, and centers for independent living.
- Delivering high quality vocational rehabilitation services.
- Employing and developing highly qualified and skilled rehabilitation staff.
- The principles of stewardship in the use of public resources.

### **Background**

DVR is committed to the challenge of continuously improving both the organization's systems and the delivery of services to those individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services. DVR utilizes the strategic planning process to develop a plan to put into action the concept of continuous improvement. DVR has an on-going three-year strategic planning process coinciding with the federally required triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Based on the information collected and analyzed from the CSNA, analysis of current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, Common Performance Measures, and input from DVR staff, the strategic planning team identified service delivery, staff development, organizational efficiencies, and DVR's role in the statewide workforce and service delivery systems, as the basis for the new strategic plan. A working version of this plan will be updated quarterly by the individuals responsible for specific activities. This information will be utilized by the Leadership Team to determine if the agency is meeting its goals and priorities and if revisions are needed.

The strategic planning team is composed of the DVR management and leadership teams, the SVRC Executive Committee, including the representative from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) 121 programs.

A summary of the goals and priorities:

- Delivery of high quality vocational rehabilitation services to all individuals with disabilities with priorities established for:
  - Transition age youth
  - Individuals residing in rural Alaska
  - Individuals who experience blindness or who have a visual impairment
  - Individuals who experience deafness or are hard of hearing

- Staff development includes efforts in:
  - Training opportunities to maintain professional certifications and for staff development
  - Leadership development
  - Succession planning
  
- Organizational efficiencies and responsibilities:
  - Meet all Federal regulations
  - Report common performance measures
  - Ensure case management software is up-to-date and will generate federal reporting that meets the requirements of the RSA-911 data report
  
- DVR is part of the statewide workforce development and service delivery systems:
  - DVR collaborates with other core WIOA agencies to improve the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services
  - Advocates for individuals with disabilities on appropriate boards and committees

## **Goals, Priorities, Strategies, and Performance Indicators**

### **Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.**

This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the needs of Alaskans with disabilities as identified by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

#### **Priority 1.1: Improve employment outcomes to more closely align with high demand jobs.**

##### **Strategies:**

- Review Labor Market Research protocol to ensure validity.
- Ensure Labor Market Research is occurring in cases at IPE development when appropriate.
- Train field staff on career pathways and expectations for employment and training outcomes.
- Utilize all training opportunities (i.e., AVTEC, UAA, UAF, and UAS, apprenticeships, etc.) by educating staff on the opportunities available.
- Engage with AVTEC to ensure staff recognize the opportunities offered.
- Work with employers to ensure opportunities for DVR clients to succeed in high demand jobs.
- Work with DOLWD Research and Analysis to ensure staff have access to the most current job forecasts by developing a distribution plan for "Trends" economic forecast magazine, economic development corporation info, etc.
- Provide training to in-house job developers.
  - Develop YouTube channel – with clips that •Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) can bring to employers, show ADA information, positive examples and experiences from other employers.
  - Develop standardized outreach materials for employers.
  - Develop standardized FAQs to be publically available.
- BEST will develop one-year plan for employer engagement and measuring success.

##### **Performance Indicators:**

- Case reviews indicate IPEs align with labor market research.
- Managers will provide training opportunities.
- Employers in high demand industries will hire DVR clients.
- Staff have access to current job forecasts.
- Training program implemented for job developers.
- BEST will develop a one year plan with SMART goals and measures of success.

#### **Priority 1.2: Evaluate services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired**

##### **Strategies:**

- Update software and procedures for Business Enterprise Program (BEP).

- Update policies and administrative codes where necessary to ensure BEP meets all regulatory requirements.
- Modernize existing sites Micro-Markets.
- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.
- Inform all regional offices about the BEP program and opportunities for referrals.

Performance Indicators:

- BEP module is installed.
- Contractor to develop/edit current policies and administrative codes to ensure BEP compliance.
- Update equipment in needed sites.
- Program evaluation is completed with recommendations for improvement.

**Priority 1.3: Evaluate services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Strategies:

- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.

Performance Indicators:

- Evaluation completed with recommendations for improvement.
- Hold roundtables to elicit information from community partners.

**Priority 1.4: Enhance Communication with Tribal Partners**

Strategies:

- Hold annual face-to-face meeting.
- Create communication plan to increase referrals and shared cases.
  - Identify contact in each region to share information and communicate information.
  - Identify clear chain of command for reporting issues.
  - Review MOU and Contingency Plan and draft changes as agreed upon.

Performance Indicators:

- Annual meeting occurs.
- Creation of a communication plan.
- MOU revised as necessary.

**Priority 1.5: Continue to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services**

Strategies:

- Increase work experience activities and sites.
- Work closely with CRPs and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) vendors to align work experiences with high demand jobs.
- Ensure that expected number of students participating in Pre-ETS matches CSNA goal.

- Continue to recruit CRPs to provide Pre-ETS services.
- Continue to ensure At-Risk-Youth are included in Pre-ETS activities.

Performance Indicators:

- Additional work experiences are available.
- Work experiences more closely mirror high demand job industries.
- Meet or exceed expected number of Pre-ETS students provided services.
- Additional CRPs are available to provide Pre-ETS services.

**Priority 1.6: Improve usage and quality assurance of CRP services in all regions**

Strategies:

- Work with CRP Coordinator to develop a comprehensive CRP monitoring plan.
- Ensure Managers are involved in vetting new CRP applicants and in creating corrective action plans.
- Use software to improve service delivery.

Performance Indicators:

- Adherence to timelines.
- Process developed and followed for new CRPs and determining corrective action plans.

**Priority 1.7: Continue to provide quality services to rural locations.**

Strategies:

- Continue to support VRC travel to rural locations.
- Develop rural travel expectations to ensure staff time is effectively utilized.
- Expand services to underserved hubs.
- Attend events such as Alaska Federation of Natives, Native Youth Olympics, Southcentral Foundation Heath Fairs, etc., to market DVR services.
- Invite TVR representation to attend rural services meeting.
- Expand use of technology in rural areas.

Performance Indicators:

- Travel approved for a minimum of two trips a year to rural areas.
- Travel expectations document is used and adhered to.
- More utilization of rural hubs for reaching rural clients.
- TVR representation at Rural Services meeting.
- Technology implemented.

**Priority 1.8: Utilize “Employment First” initiative**

Strategies:

- Hire an Employment First Coordinator.

- Increase Supported Employment opportunities.
- Increase use of Provisional Hire within the State.
  - Include training at the hiring manager level.
  - Meet with other division directors to train on the Provisional Hire process.
  - Adapt AWARE work status to include Provisional Hire as an option.
  - Create links to include Provisional Hire opportunities when new positions post.
- Use Job Ready consistently in all regions and provide training.

Performance Indicators:

- Employment First Coordinator is successful in making connections to enhance employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.
- Increased successful Supported Employment cases.
- Increased Provisional Hire requests and placements.

**Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.**

This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the future.

**Priority 2.1: Ensure resources are available for hiring and retaining qualified staff**

Strategies:

- Schedule “all-staff” training sessions for professional staff when feasible.
- Utilize internship programs.
- Expand recruitment strategies to fill both VRC and VRA vacancies.
- Ensure all staff are aware of continuing education and advancement opportunities.
- Develop educational development plans for non-CRC VRCs.
- Ensure all VRAs receive VRA Online Training.

Performance Indicators:

- All staff training occurs.
- Internship positions are utilized.
- Communication to staff occurs.
- All non-CRC VRCs have an Educational Development Plan.
- Training checklists are completed for all staff.

**Priority 2.2: Ensure ongoing staff development and training**

Strategies:

- Provide links to training on technology Microsoft Office, Outlook, basic computer training.
- Provide specialized training: Field Administrative Support Team (FAST), BEST, Blind Services, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Division Statewide Assessment Team (DSAT), etc.



- Provide ongoing training opportunities for VRAs.
- Rewrite modules for VRC training.
- Develop ongoing education for eligibilities, severity of disability, plans, closures, etc.
- Regional Managers provide training on software and reporting.

Performance Indicators:

- Links are posted on SharePoint.
- Specialized training is developed and delivered.
- Opportunities are communicated to VRAs.
- Modules are updated and delivered.
- Quarterly training opportunities for staff is scheduled and available.

**Priority 2.3: Continue mentoring and succession planning**

Strategies:

- Senior VRCs (CRCs) are given opportunities to be in Regional Manager acting status.
- Develop specialized desk manuals for unique job duties.

Performance Indicators:

- Regional Manager Acting Status is delegated equally to senior VRCs.
- Desk manuals for unique positions are created and easily accessible for successors.

**Goal 3 – Quality Assurance: DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes**

This goal reflects DVR’s commitment to continual improvement and efficiency.

**Priority 3.1: Provide on-going Quality Assurance (QA) and program evaluation activities to ensure integrity of VR Services**

Strategies:

- Program evaluation results are reviewed by administrative and management staff.
- Consumer satisfaction responses are analyzed and disseminated to SVRC on a quarterly basis and sent to Managers monthly.
- Internal case review process and tool is developed and implemented.
- Case reviews are both qualitative and quantitative in nature.
- Develop internal controls that ensure fidelity and accuracy of data submitted to RSA.
- Create reports in Tableau for Managers to review cases frequently.
- Help Desk staff will provide on-going support and training by participating in monthly staff meetings and flying to Fairbanks and Juneau semi-annually to meet with staff.
- Develop position paper by February 2020, on the importance of face-to-face case reviews.

Performance Indicators:

- Internal documentation revised as necessary based on QA results.
- Staff training developed as deemed necessary based upon case review results.
- Results are shared with appropriate staff.
- Case reviews are completed and scheduled on a regular basis and incorporate internal controls.
- All staff are trained on new procedures.
- Regional Managers will have access and be able to run reports when needed.
- Staff meetings are scheduled with Help Desk Staff on an on-going basis.
- Position paper is completed.

**Priority 3.2: DVR will meet or exceed state and federal common performance measures (CPMs)**

Strategies:

- Establish baseline data for all WIOA required data elements and negotiate with RSA on required CPMs.
- Monitor data collection processes to ensure program fidelity.
- Work with National Clearinghouse to obtain additional education information.
- Work with Leadership to determine appropriate State Goals known as Missions & Measures.

Performance Indicators:

- Negotiation with RSA completed.
- All required federal reporting submitted on time and is accurate.
- Schedule established for sending/receiving data from the National Clearinghouse.
- Meet or exceed State Missions and Measures.

**Priority 3.3: Continue to update the AWARE case management system to provide quality data**

Strategies:

- Help Desk team actively participates in all AWARE user groups and Community of Practice group to ensure DVR's work flows are considered when Alliance is creating enhancements to the software.
- Help Desk team meet and thoroughly analyze impact to field and accounting staff with each iteration of RSA-911 data manual, upgrades to the AWARE system, or clarification of current regulations by RSA.
- Help Desk team works with the management team to ensure on-going, accurate data collection by field staff.
- Help Desk team coordinates all training of field and other staff and provides training in timely manner.
- Help Desk team routinely runs QA on AWARE data to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Policy, Planning and Program Evaluation team (PP&P) to evaluate processes for moving to a paperless system. This includes hardware and software purchases that may be necessary and staff training.
- Incorporate SharePoint in all policy and procedure development.

#### Performance Indicators:

- All AWARE updates are reviewed and installed as required.
- Federal reports are produced on-time and accurately. Staff are notified and trained on any changes to AWARE.
- Required data is collected accurately.
- DVR services are not negatively impacted
- RSA-911 edit issues are resolved.
- Plan for moving to paperless is established with timelines and costs.
- Policies and Procedures are available on SharePoint.

#### **Priority 3.4: Continue to support SARA communication system**

##### Strategies:

- Help Desk staff will continue support and provide training for SARA.
- Increase SARA usage 10% by staff over the next 6 months.
- Incorporate BEP vendors into SARA and provide training to the vendors.
- Incorporate CRPs into SARA.

#### Performance Indicators:

- SARA interface is fully functional.
- SARA use increased by 10% by all staff.
- BEP vendors use and respond to SARA notifications.
- Staff and CRPs use SARA for communication.

#### **Priority 3.5: Explore and improve technology usage**

##### Strategies:

- Replace current Intranet by implementing SharePoint and training staff.
- Explore internal IT staff possibility.
- Set up a "Text DVR" number for anyone to request additional information about DVR to increase outreach.

#### Performance Indicators:

- SharePoint implemented and staff is trained on use.
- IT support is resolved.
- Text DVR number set up and functioning.

#### **Priority 3.6: Review existing Policies and Procedures**

##### Strategies:

- Revise existing policies.

- Obtain SVRC approval on policies related to service delivery.
- Revise client services procedures.

Performance Indicators:

- New policies written and all staff is trained on the policies.
- Policies are posted publically.
- New procedures are written and all staff is trained on the procedures.

**Goal 4 – Leadership in WIOA: DVR will provide leadership in the workforce development system**

This goal is intended to strengthen DVR’s connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

**Priority 4.1: Improve communication between the WIOA partners**

Strategies:

- Develop structured communication plan with Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS).
- Develop structured communication plan with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD).

Performance Indicators

- Improved and increased communication, referrals, and cross agency collaboration.
- Improved and increased interdepartmental communication.

**Priority 4.2: Increase Office of Children’s Services and DVR Collaboration**

Strategies:

- Create a scorecard for serving the At-Risk-Youth population to determine baseline and progress.

Performance Indicators

- Scorecard developed and implemented to measure success.

**Priority 4.3: Promote Senior Employment**

Strategies:

- Promote senior employment by forming a standing committee between DETS and DVR to determine activities to improve senior employment rates.

Performance Indicators

- Activities and resources identified and carried out to improve this rate.