

Technical Assistance Needs Assessment Questionnaire For State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education has awarded a contract to Development Associates, Inc. to assess the technical assistance needs of State VR agencies and State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) and to determine the most effective means of providing assistance to address those needs. This questionnaire is designed to gather the opinions of staff members of State VR agencies on these questions. The results of this needs assessment will be used by RSA to design a technical assistance system that best meets technical assistance needs within existing resources.

The questionnaire consists of five modules. The first four modules are designed to assess the technical assistance needs of State VR agencies, while the fifth module is designed to assess the technical assistance needs of SRCs. These modules are designed to be completed by different members of the State VR agency. An additional sixth module is designed to assess the technical assistance needs of the SRCs and is to be completed by the SRC Chairperson.

Module 1: State Agency Director

Module 2: Director of Financial Management for VR

Module 3: Director of Human Resources for VR

Module 4: Director of Field Services/ Counselor Supervision for VR

Module 5: Liaison to the State Rehabilitation Council

The State Agency Director should determine who will complete each of the modules based on individuals' knowledge and experience with the topics addressed in the module. The goal is to have at least four different respondents providing responses. While there will be different respondents to the various modules, the State Agency Director should be sure that all of the questionnaire's modules are submitted at the same time to Development Associates, and that this occurs within two weeks following this questionnaire's receipt.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1820-~~xxxx~~. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 180 minutes per agency response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. **If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to:** U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651. **If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:**

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Attn: Charles Sadler, Room 5002
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20202-2800

**Module 1:
State Agency Director**

1. RSA’s goal in providing technical assistance to State VR agencies is to improve the performance of those agencies. Presented below is a list of potential topic areas for technical assistance. Please rate each of these topic areas of assistance in terms of the extent of need for assistance **in the next two years** in order to improve agency performance, using a scale from 1 (little need) to 5 (great need). Use a rating of 1 if the item is not relevant to your agency. Please try to use as many of the scale points as possible to illustrate the relative need for these topic areas of assistance.

	Rating				
	Little Need				Great Need
A. <u>VR Act, Regulations, etc.</u>					
(1) Understanding of the Rehabilitation Act and current regulatory language	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Developing VR policies consistent with law and regulations	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Developing the State Plan	1	2	3	4	5
(4) How to participate in and benefit from RSA monitoring and compliance reviews	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Title I Standards and Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
B. <u>Interagency Cooperation</u>					
(1) Participation in the Workforce Investment Act system	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Working with State labor/employment departments	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Working with the Social Security Administration	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Working with social and health service agencies	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Working with non-profit organizations	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Working with independent living programs	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Working with K-12 programs on transition	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Working with post-secondary institutions	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Working with adult education programs	1	2	3	4	5
(10) Working with vocational education programs	1	2	3	4	5
(11) Working with “for-profit” organizations	1	2	3	4	5
(12) Working with American Indian VR Services Programs	1	2	3	4	5
C. <u>Needs Assessment and Planning</u>					
(1) Needs assessment	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Defining market segments	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>Rating</u>				
	<u>Little Need</u>				<u>Great Need</u>
D. <u>Marketing and Outreach</u>					
(1) Marketing to attract individuals with disabilities looking for jobs	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Marketing VR within the State government	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Developing a marketing plan/public image	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Referral and outreach to specific populations	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Building relationships with business and industry	1	2	3	4	5
E. <u>Program Management</u>					
(1) Leadership development	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Structuring VR within a larger agency	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Organization flattening or streamlining	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Succession planning for managers/ staff	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Operating under an Order of Selection	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Management information systems	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Quality assurance processes	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Continuous improvement	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Building capacity for in-house service delivery	1	2	3	4	5
F. <u>Financial Management</u>					
(1) State matching requirements	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Maintenance of effort requirements	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Caps or limits on services/ cost limitation policies	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Allocating resources	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Means testing for selected VR services	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Effective use of cooperative agreements	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Appropriate use of Community Rehabilitation Programs	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Appropriate use of State rehabilitation facilities	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Managing Business Enterprise Programs (BEPs)	1	2	3	4	5
G. <u>Financial Agreements</u>					
(1) Provision of services through third party contracting	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Managing and evaluating third party funding	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Performance-based contracting	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Fee for service arrangements	1	2	3	4	5

Rating				
<u>Little</u>				<u>Great</u>
<u>Need</u>				<u>Need</u>

H. Program Evaluation

(1) Program evaluation methods	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Developing performance measures	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Use of performance data for program improvement	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Assessing consumer satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Assessing outcomes other than employment	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Tracking former participants	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Program self-assessment tools	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Evaluating services by vendors	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Making performance data available to the public	1	2	3	4	5
(10) Identifying effective practices	1	2	3	4	5

I. Use of Outside Resources

(1) Generating public support for VR services	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Expanding the agency's funding base	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Identifying resources for VR	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Use of SRCs	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Working with consumer groups	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Working with employers	1	2	3	4	5

2. Are there any other topic areas of technical assistance relating to the management and administration of VR services that are of significant importance for improving the performance of **your agency**? (Please note that other modules of this questionnaire address technical assistance needs in the areas of financial management, human resources, and services to consumers.)

a.

b.

c.

3. A number of individuals in the VR system have suggested that technical assistance to State VR agencies should include examples of effective practices from other State agencies. Which of the following statements best describes how you believe that such practices should be identified? (Check one)

- a. RSA should provide examples from State agencies only after the effectiveness of practices has been documented through independent evaluation.
- b. RSA should make professional judgments about which practices appear to be worthy of replication, and disseminate those practices.
- c. RSA should not judge the effectiveness of the practices, and should disseminate all practices described as effective by State agencies.

4. Staff of the Rehabilitation Services Administration serving on State Teams will be one source of technical assistance to State VR agencies. In your opinion, what topic areas of technical assistance **require** the involvement of RSA staff?

RSA Staff Involvement Required

a. Interpretation of the Act and regulations	Yes	No
b. Development and review of State policies	Yes	No
c. Financial issues relating to the State grant	Yes	No
d. State match requirements	Yes	No
e. Maintenance of effort	Yes	No
f. Third party funding of VR services	Yes	No
g. Effective State participation in the RSA monitoring process	Yes	No
h. The Title I Standards and Indicators	Yes	No
i. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)	Yes	No
j. RSA-recognized effective VR practices	Yes	No

5. What other topic areas of technical assistance, if any, do you believe **require** the involvement of RSA staff?

- a.
- b.
- c.

6. The Institute for Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) selects topic areas on which to develop specific training and technical assistance materials. What topic areas would you suggest that IRI focus on the near future?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
7. There are a variety of ways in which technical assistance can be provided to State VR agencies. Please indicate your perceptions of the effectiveness of various types of technical assistance using a scale from 1 (not very effective) to 5 (highly effective). Please try to use as many of the scale points as possible to illustrate the relative effectiveness of these types of assistance.

	<u>Rating</u>				
	<u>Not very</u> <u>Effective</u>				<u>Highly</u> <u>Effective</u>
a. In-person visits	1	2	3	4	5
b. General conferences (e.g., CSAVR)	1	2	3	4	5
c. Specialized conferences (e.g., fiscal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Videoconferences	1	2	3	4	5
e. Teleconferences	1	2	3	4	5
f. Personal e-mail	1	2	3	4	5
g. Telephone conversations	1	2	3	4	5
h. Website resources	1	2	3	4	5
i. Web-based training	1	2	3	4	5
j. Webcasts	1	2	3	4	5
k. Listservs	1	2	3	4	5
l. Information circulars or bulletins, policy directives	1	2	3	4	5
m. Information on CDs	1	2	3	4	5

State Agency Descriptive Data

8. Agency type:

- General 1
- Combined 2
- Blind 3

9. VR agency location:

- Designated State Agency (Independent Agency) 1
- Designated State Unit Within Labor Department 2
- Designated State Unit Within Education Department 3
- Designated State Unit Within Human Service Department 4
- Other: _____ 5

10. Are you currently operating under an Order of Selection?

- Yes 1
- No 2

11. Is there a financial needs test required to receive services?

- Yes 1
- No 2

12. Total number of consumers served in FY 2006 (all statuses including applicants):

13. Percentage of consumers served in FY2006 (of those in Item 12) who were:

- a. consumers with significant disabilities _____ %
- b. Social Security beneficiaries _____ %
- c. transitioning students _____ %

14. Percentage of State match achieved through cooperative arrangements: _____ %