

## Attachment 4.11(e)(2)

### **Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities**

#### **Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities**

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) is a combined vocational rehabilitation agency with a separate and distinct Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (VRB). Although VR and VRB are separate and distinct offices within MDRS, in order to have one state plan for Mississippi the goals for both offices are combined. The information reported in this attachment relates to the Goals and Priorities identified in the FFY 2012 State Plan Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

#### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

**Goal I: Improve Access to Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities as measured by an increase in transportation services planned on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for consumers during the federal fiscal year (FFY).**

##### The extent to which the goal was achieved:

Staff planned transportation services on 155 Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) during the period October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. This total represents an increase of 59 IPEs that included transportation services over the same time period in the previous federal fiscal year (FFY). This goal was met due in large part to increased awareness of transportation resources and development of natural transportation supports.

##### Strategies which contributed to the goal:

1. MDRS staff identified 142 formal transportation resources.
2. The Community Transportation Resource Guide compiled by MDRS is published and updated on the MDRS website for wide distribution and easy access to information by consumers.
3. MDRS staff actively participated in transportation-related planning groups, advisory committees, and initiatives during the period October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. Staff members will be encouraged to increase this participation in the upcoming FFY due to transportation being listed as the biggest barrier to employment in Mississippi according to the Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs.
4. In August 2012, MDRS submitted a Team Application for the 2012 Job Access Mobility Institute as supported by the Community Transportation Association of America's Joblinks Employment Transportation Center. The application was not accepted, but the partnerships formed in making the team selections will help facilitate success in future transportation pilot projects.

Factors that impeded non-achievement: Not Applicable.

**Goal II: Increase Training Opportunities for VR Consumers as measured by an increase in training opportunities planned (including Community Rehabilitation Services) on the IPE for consumers during the FFY.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

VR staff planned training opportunities on 1,856 IPEs during the period October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. This total represents a slight decrease of 45 IPEs that included training opportunities for VR consumers over the same period during the prior FFY. The state's two personal adjustment centers for the blind, the Addie McBryde Rehabilitation Center (AMRC) for the Blind and the REACH Center for the Blind (REACH), experienced a slight variation in the number of consumers served during the same time period as listed above for the VR Program. AMRC served 147 consumers, which is the exact number served over the same period during the prior FFY, and REACH served 33 consumers, which is a decrease of 17 over the same period during the prior FFY.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

1. MDRS staff attended 38 trainings that addressed available training resources for clients.
2. MDRS program staff worked with staff from the MDRS Office of Communications and Consumer Relations to ensure that the existing resource materials remain updated.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

The decrease experienced by the VR Program is due to the fact that all priority categories are currently open, which leads to more short-term cases rather than long-term cases where training services may be provided.

**Goal III: Increase Awareness of Vocational Rehabilitation Services as demonstrated by increased number of applicants for VR and VRB Services.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

Staff processed 9,838 applications from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, which represents 244 less applications than what was processed in the prior FFY.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

MDRS staff conducted a focused awareness campaign which included staff distributing printed materials, presenting at 215 events, and networking at various other events.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

The state of the economy and the high unemployment rate negatively impacted the number of applications taken. Due to the high unemployment rate, many people with disabilities chose to pursue Social Security disability benefits instead of competing for the limited number of jobs available in the state. This statement is supported by the increased number of applications processed by the Disability Determination Services in Mississippi, which saw an increase of almost 1,200 claimants over the previous FFY.

	Performance Level National Standard	MDRS Performance indicator
1.1.....	Equal or exceed previous Performance period	4,559 ('11) 4,559 ('12)
	<u>Federal Minimum Standard</u>	<u>FFY 2012</u>
1.2.....	55.8%	70.9%
1.3.....	72.6%	99.7%
1.4.....	62.4%	65.6%
1.5.....	0.52 (Ratio)	0.88
1.6.....	53.0(Math. Difference)	61.0
2.1.....	0.80 (Ratio)	0.852

An analysis of standards and indicators for FFY 2012 indicates that MDRS exceeded each category. This data has been shared with consumers, the State Rehabilitation Council, and VR service delivery staff. MDRS is confident it will meet these standards in the future.

## Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

FFY 2012 Expenditures of Funds for Innovation and Expansion: \$602,568.98

The summary of Innovation and Expansion activities below relates back to Attachment 4.11(d), effective October 1, 2011, as that attachment was in effect for the FFY 2012 period.

The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) expends funds annually towards the professional development of agency personnel as discussed in Attachment 4.10, **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**. In FFY 2012 MDRS expended \$4,990.32 on disability specific training for staff. MDRS also expended funds on the Regional Training Teams to provide orientation training to new employees and training on policy changes to existing employees as well as training to all employees on available training resources for consumers. However, funds for the Regional Training Teams and Training Resources for Consumers came from the Quality Training Grant and, therefore, are not reported in this Attachment.

AbilityWorks, Inc., a division of MDRS that is administered through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, provides vocational assessment, job training, and actual work experience for individuals with disabilities. Traditionally, this community rehabilitation program operates most services within the confines of a facility. However, during FFY 2010 MDRS chose to expand its efforts in providing community-based work evaluation, job readiness, and job placement through AbilityWorks. In FFY 2012 MDRS expended \$587,054.74 for these community based services.

In order for MDRS to participate in Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), which were developed with the state's one-stop partners, funds were expended, as appropriate, for cost-allocation aspects of the operation of the centers where VR staff is physically located. This participation assured that MDRS is a full partner in the centers, services to eligible VR clients are available, and that partnerships with other one-stop members resulted in networking to assure the individuals with a disability are involved in a seamless system. MDRS expended \$37,965.20 in allocated costs associated with the centers where VR staff was physically located in FFY 2012.

The ability of VR clients to access and use assistive technology is critical in the overall vocational rehabilitation process. It is essential to expanding successful employment outcomes. Recognizing the importance of assistive technology to client success, MDRS spent \$148,945.78 in these efforts during FFY 2012.

In accordance with current regulations, MDRS utilized funds to support funding of the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council. MDRS spent a total of \$10,523.92 in support of the State Rehabilitation Council (\$7,331.63) and the State Independent Living Council (\$3,192.29).

This attachment was developed after a review of the results of the Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs. Any pertinent findings from the Statewide Assessment were incorporated

into this attachment. Additionally, members of the State Rehabilitation Council were involved in the development of this attachment.