

## 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 2013 State Plan Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

#### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind**

#### **Goal I: Improve Access to Transportation for Employment for Individuals with Disabilities.**

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

Staff planned transportation services on 167 Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) during the period October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. This total represents an increase of 46 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 149 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, 2012 through September 30, 2013. 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 2013 MDRS signed a contract with LeFleur Transportation to join the MS Department of Mental Health in the Greenwood Transportation Pilot Project as initiated by the Mississippi Transportation Coalition. The intent of this project is to improve access to reliable transportation in one of the more rural parts of the state and to increase ridership in the program to drive down transportation costs for everyone.

Factors that impeded non-achievement: Not Applicable.

## **Goal II: Increase Training Opportunities for VR Consumers, Including Community Rehabilitation Program Services, Customized Employment, Apprenticeships, and Internships.**

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

VR staff planned training opportunities on 1,765 IPEs during the period October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. This total represents an increase of 37 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 some changes in the number of consumers served during the same time period as listed above for the VR Program. AMRC served 169 consumers, which is an increase of 22 over the same period during the prior FFY. REACH served 6 consumers in the first quarter of FFY 2013, which is a decrease of 3 over the same period during the prior FFY. MDRS closed REACH in January 2013. Consumers interested in attending a structured discovery center are now being referred to centers located outside the state of Mississippi for those services.

### Strategies utilized towards the goal:

1. MDRS staff attended 131 trainings that addressed available training resources for clients.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal: Not Applicable.

## **Goal III: Improve Public Awareness of Disability to the General Public, Employers, and Other Stakeholders.**

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

While VR/VRB staff continued to fulfill all requests to present at speaking engagements and provided a large volume of services brochures, applications for services decreased from the prior year.

### Strategies utilized towards the goal:

MDRS staff conducted a focused awareness campaign which included staff distributing 14,300 brochures related to VR and VRB services, presenting at 169 events, and networking at various other events.

### Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

Efforts were underway in FFY 2013 to update the MDRS website to make it more user-friendly, especially regarding access by people with disabilities and the general public to pertinent information and to request services. Therefore, current information was not available on the website throughout the year.

## **Supported Employment Program**

NOTE: In FFY 2013 specific goals were not established for the Supported Employment Program, but priority areas were identified. Below is an evaluation of those SE priority areas as listed in Attachment

4.11(c)(4) for FFY 2013. In FFY 2014 MDRS plans to hire a new program coordinator for the SE Program with a more experienced background in the field of intellectual disabilities. Based on this new hire, MDRS foresees changes occurring in the SE Program to provide a smoother transition for the clients. These changes will be reflected in Attachment 4.11(c)(4) of the State Plan for FFY 2016.

### **Priority Area I: Supported Employment Staff Members Make Every Effort to Identify and Facilitate Natural Supports that Occur in the Workplace.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

MDRS requires each SE Counselor to work on natural supports with the clients.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

SE Counselors continued to identify and facilitate natural supports in the workplace.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

Periodically, SE Counselors face challenges in setting up natural supports with family, church members, communities, and employers.

### **Priority Area II: Develop Cooperative Arrangements with Other Provider Agencies and Organizations to Expand the Program to Unserved and Underserved Populations.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

Early in FFY 2013 MDRS entered into an agreement with the MS Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) to join the Customized Employment Demonstration Project with The Arc of MS, MDRS and Sheltered Workshop Agencies. The Arc of MS manages the project. MDRS is also currently working with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) to design a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a statewide system of coordinated, cost efficient vocational/employment service for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities with minimal overlap of responsibility and maximum utilization of resources between MDRS and DMH.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

SE Counselors continued to expand cooperative arrangements with other provider agencies and organizations, both public and private.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

Cooperative agreements are still being negotiated.

### **Priority Area III: The Supported Employment Program will continue emphasis on individual employment placements.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

MDRS has made it a priority for SE Counselors to utilize the concepts behind Customized Employment, which makes job seeker placements more individualized based on the individual's interests and abilities.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

SE Counselors utilized Customized Employment and Discovery to help with employment placements for the job seekers.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

Some individuals/family members refused to participate in the Customized Employment process. Also, the process can be lengthy at times and the individual needs a job as soon as possible.

**Priority Area IV: Work with Extended Employment Providers.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

MDRS staff established 60 new Extended Service Agreements to provide ongoing support systems needed to maintain employment for the job seekers.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

SE Counselors were encouraged to work with the job seekers and their families as well as other interested parties to establish Extended Service Agreements.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal:

Unfortunately, an extended service provider cannot always be identified.

**Priority Area V: Person Centered Planning and Customized Employment as Integral Parts of Service Provision Continue to Be High Priorities.**

The extent to which the goal was achieved:

MDRS developed Customized Employment Training for Counselors to achieve this goal.

Strategies utilized towards the goal:

MDRS submitted a proposal to Southeast TACE to provide Customized Employment Training as well as technical assistance support. SE staff is currently attending a series of Customized Employment Training.

Factors that impeded the achievement of the goal: Not applicable.

	Performance Level National Standard	MDRS Performance indicator
1.1.....	Equal or exceed previous Performance period	4,559 ('12) 4,569 ('13)
	<u>Federal Minimum Standard</u>	<u>FFY 2013</u>
1.2.....	55.8%	73.07%
1.3.....	72.6%	99.82%
1.4.....	62.4%	72.73%
1.5.....	0.52 (Ratio)	0.67
1.6.....	53.0(Math. Difference)	61.5
2.1.....	0.80 (Ratio)	0.884

An analysis of standards and indicators for FFY 2013 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 2013 Expenditures of Funds for Innovation and Expansion: \$569,124

The summary of Innovation and Expansion activities below relates back to Attachment 4.11(d), effective October 1, 2012, as that attachment was in effect for the FFY 2013 period.

MDRS has made it a priority to expand service delivery of training opportunities to VR and VRB consumers. In FFY 2013 the agency expended \$16,533 in Title I funds to the DORE Program for consumers with learning difficulties to participate in a highly personalized exercise program to stimulate the cerebellum, making it easier for them to learn and develop new skills. MDRS also expended funds on Smart Work Ethics Training for consumers and Vocational Evaluation Tools. However, this training was covered through AbilityWorks, Inc.

MDRS expends funds annually towards the professional development of agency personnel as discussed in Attachment 4.10, **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**. In FFY 2013 MDRS expended \$109,521 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; development training for staff selected to become Smart Work Ethics Trainers; and, training for Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) for the Mentor Program. However, funds for the Regional Training Teams, Smart Work Ethics Trainer Development and RCD Mentor Program 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 2013 MDRS expended \$425,250 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 \$31,150 in allocated costs associated with the centers where VR staff was physically located in FFY 2013.

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 \$150,584 in these efforts during FFY 2013.

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 \$23,763 in support of the State Rehabilitation Council (\$20,596) and the State Independent Living Council (\$3,167).

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.