



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
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September 22, 2022

Mr. Brian Reilly
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Mr. Reilly:

Pursuant to Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Commissioner of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) respectfully submits the following information regarding the steps that were taken to implement the recommendations contained within the Office of the State Comptroller's report "Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) Supported Employment Program (2020-S-46)."

OSC Recommendation 1:

Develop and implement improved controls to ensure eligibility determinations, IPE finalizations, and IPE annual reviews are being completed timely.

NYSED Response:

ACCES-VR's implementation and continued use of weekly case status reports concerning timeliness in completing eligibility determinations and developing Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE), addresses this recommendation.

Information is shared with district offices and used to monitor compliance and take appropriate action as needed.

The United States Department of Education (USDOE), Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), provides federal oversight for all State Vocational Rehabilitation programs. In July 2021 they advised ACCES-VR the corrective actions had been successfully resolved after two quarters of sustained compliance.

The following is RSA's notification to ACCES-VR advising of successful completion of a corrective action July 2021. This was shared with NYS OSC Auditors prior to their March 2022 final audit report.

Eligibility - *Comply with 34 C.F.R. §361.41(b)(1) by making eligibility determinations within the required 60-day period.*

RSA Response to July 2021 Quarterly CAP Update: *This corrective action was resolved on July 31, 2020. The Actual Completion Date has been noted. RSA continues to monitor sustained performance.*

IPE - *Comply with 34 C.F.R. §§ 361.45(a)(1) and (e) to ensure IPEs are developed with the 90-day Federal timeframe from the date of eligibility determination.*

RSA Response to July 2021 Quarterly CAP Update: *ACCES-VR has sustained performance and timely IPE development within 90-days from the date of eligibility determination for two consecutive quarters. This corrective action has been resolved, and ACCES-VR has been asked to continue to maintain its performance and compliance.*

OSC Recommendation 2:

Develop and implement procedures to ensure that IPEs are fully developed for each participant who requires one and contain sufficient detail.

NYSED Response:

ACCES-VR implementation of check lists to verify that all required data is included prior to finalizing- an eligibility determination, creating the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and successfully closing a case addresses this recommendation.

In addition, ACCES-VR is in the process of transitioning to a new electronic case management system, Alliance Enterprise's Aware system scheduled for 2023 which is anticipated to improve compliance. The list of potential criteria to evaluate progress toward the goal is also under review and revision to better evaluate progress.

ACCES-VR's use of check lists helps ensure that all essential information is documented and was reviewed and approved by RSA prior to implementation.

OSC Recommendation 3:

Develop a process to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the ACCES-VR program based on individual participants' goals and achievements to ensure that participants are receiving the full benefit of its services and ACCES-VR is meeting the goals of its mission.

NYSED Response:

ACCES-VR's RSA approved management and peer led reviews conducted in the district offices beginning this past June 2022, address this recommendation.

In addition, ACCES-VR's, Quality Assurance and Monitoring Unit continues to maintain a robust monitoring program conducting 5 district office case reviews, 1 state-wide review and 30 + vendor reviews which includes supported employment providers.

District offices routinely and regularly meet with Core Rehabilitation Service (CRS) providers which includes supported employment providers.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors also review deliverables submitted by supported employment providers and rate the quality of the service provided.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Monica Toye-Smith at Monica.Toye-Smith@nysed.gov.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Cates-Williams".

Sharon Cates-Williams

c: Ceylane Meyers-Ruff
Linda Schramm
Monica Toye-Smith
James Kampf
Jeanne Day