

- 1  **Exploring the State of VR Practices for Serving Youth Current Thinking and Recommendations**
- 2  **Introduction**
- 3  **Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on VR Practices and Youth**

About the Center

  - We conduct research and provide trainings and technical assistance to investigate problems, craft solutions, and design actionable strategies for translating research into useable, feasible, and effective strategies for transition stakeholders – VR agencies, policymakers, researchers, transitioning youth and their families, educators, practitioners, and employers
  - Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, NIDILRR  
Grant Number: 90RT5034-02-01
- 4  **Today's Webinar Summarizes Our Work to Date on Transition Practices**
  - What have we learned?
    - Collaboration and partnerships
    - Vocational rehabilitation counselor best practices
    - Data analytics
    - Specific transition practices
  - Broad perspectives on the transition field
    - Overview of the Center's work
    - Perspectives from CSAVR
  - Questions and answers
- 5  **Collaborative Practices between VR and Higher Education for Students with Intellectual Disability and Autism**

Meg Grigal & Jennifer Sulewski
- 6  **Partnerships build on existing relationships**
- 7  **Based on shared values & understanding each other's goals and processes**
- 8  **Formal communication structures**

- 9  **Daily informal communication**
- 10  **Lesson Learned**  
How you collect data impacts what you know about collaboration
- 11  **Lesson Learned**  
Part of the success of the partnership was the level of engaged VR counselors (dedicated counselors, met regularly)
- 12  **VR & IHE staff see themselves as a student-focused team**
- 13  **VR support opens access to higher education for those who are not wealthy**  
“Tuition assistance [from VR] is just huge and has been an incredible game changer [because it] makes [inclusive higher education] no longer a rich kids club. This really opens the doors to a much more inclusive possibility.”  
– Higher Education Staff
- 14  **Impact on Transition Process**  
VR is a larger part of the hand off from higher education to employment.
- These partnerships had a purposeful approach to transitioning students from the higher education program to adult employment and supports.
- There was active engagement to determine what a student’s vision was and how to help them achieve it.
- 15  **VR support for higher education is important to success at multiple levels**
- 16  **Implications**
- 17  **Thank you**  
1 For more information on these findings visit:  
<http://vrpracticesandyouth.org/>  
2 For more information about inclusive higher education visit:  
[www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)
- 18  **Identifying Best Practices used by VR Counselors who Serve Youth Effectively**

Ellen Fabian & Richard Luecking  
Center for Transition & Career Innovation, University of Maryland

19  **Identifying VR Counselor  
Effective Transition Practices**

- Two-phase study to explore VR counselors' perceptions and preparedness to implement best practices in transition
- Methods included an online survey and structured individual interviews

20  **Research Questions**

- Phase 1: What are the perceptions of state VR agency counselors on transition-related practices regarding their importance & preparation?
  - National e-survey of 500 SVRA counselors
- Phase 2: What strategies and challenges do a sample of SVRAs identify in implementation of transition practices under WIOA?
  - Interviews with 30 SVRA counselors

21  **Phase 1 Study Findings on Transition Practices**

- ALL required Transition Practices rated as important by VR Counselors, including Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Significant gap between ratings of Importance of transition practices, and VR counselor ratings of their preparedness to provide/implement them
- VR counselors with specialized youth caseloads rated themselves more prepared to deliver transition services
- Need for ongoing training and professional development at the local level to build capacity of VR counselors and their partners in delivery and implementation of required Pre-employment and other transition services

22  **Phase 2 of VR Counselor Study**

- To understand implementation strategies and barriers of State VR counselors implementing best practices in youth transition
- We conducted 30 structured interviews with VR counselors across 7 state agencies

23  **Phase 2 Study Findings**

- State VR counselors identified 2 key areas of need in delivery of transition services, including Pre-ETS:

- (1) family engagement and outreach;
- (2) partnerships with local school systems
- Frequently identified barrier to implementation was lack of availability of well-prepared CRPs to deliver effective transition services to students with disabilities

#### 24 **Take-Aways from VR Transition Practice Studies**

- Increase and expand access to and capacity of local CRPs to deliver best practices in community integrated settings
- Partner with local school systems to enhance transition services under IDEA by developing, expanding and enhancing community-integrated work-based learning experiences in diverse settings
- Consider specialized VR youth caseloads to support strong school, family and community relationships that facilitate implementation of transition services
- Reach out and engage students and families in VR via pre-employment transition services through strong partnerships with schools and other community organizations

#### 25 **More Information**

Neubert, D., Luecking, R., & Fabian, E. (2018). Transition practices of vocational rehabilitation counselors serving students and youth with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy & Education*, 32, 54 -65

#### 26 **Using Data Analytics to Better Serve Transition-age Youth**

Purvi Sevak & Todd Honeycutt  
Mathematica

#### 27 **Value of Data Analytics to VR Agencies**

- WIOA emphasizes performance measurement and evidence-based practices
- Data analytic tools can help agencies identify effective practices, develop evidence, and inform program and policy changes
- Center activities have included:
  - Learning how VR agencies are using performance management tools
  - Providing technical assistance to expand analytic capabilities of agencies
  - Developing guides and tools that VR agency staff can use for performance measurement

### 28 **Why Improve Data Analytic Capacity?**

- VR agencies have rich data sources
  - Can draw on these data using readily accessible software
- Periodic analyses can help VR agency staff monitor:
  - Who receives—and who provides—services
  - Youth characteristics
  - Costs
  - Changes over time
- VR agency staff can use data analytics to:
  - Compare statistics with expectations
  - Show the effectiveness of services and programs
  - Apply evidence-based practices

### 29 **Data Analytics is Part of a Continuous Program Improvement Cycle**

### 30 **VR Program Evaluation Coach**

- A tool to help you securely and efficiently evaluate changes in your agency's policies, programs, and services
  - Accessible for free online at [www.VREvalCoach.com](http://www.VREvalCoach.com)
- Helps staff conduct rigorous evaluations to assess the impacts of services
  - Could be any service, program, or policy
- Guides users through the program evaluation process
  - Developing an evaluation question
  - Identifying a comparison group
  - Conducting statistical analysis
  - Reporting
  - Includes guides, tips, and examples

### 31 **VR Program Evaluation Coach website**

### 32 **Measure Twice, Cut Once Research Briefs**

- Using the RSA-911 Case Service Report to Monitor Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Using VR Agencies' Administrative Data to Monitor Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Developing Performance Measures to Monitor Pre-Employment Transition Services

–<https://vrpracticesandyouth.org/vocational-rehabilitation-vr-practices/center-publications/>

33  **Example: Tracking Receipt of Pre-Employment Transition Services**

34  **Performance Metrics for Pre-Employment Transition Services**

35  **What Can You Do Next?**

- Consider the challenges your agency or organization is facing and how you can use data analytics to address those challenges
- Utilize resources to improve performance management
- Build the evidence base on VR practices that improve outcomes for youth with disabilities

36  **Resources**

- Evaluation tools
  - The VR Program Evaluation Coach, an online tool to help VR agencies assess their programs: <https://vrealcoach.com/>
  - An issue brief on performance management issues for VR agencies: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/performance-management-for-state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies-serving-transition-aged-youth>
  - The Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Technical Assistance Center, which provides training, technical assistance, and resources for data analysis and evaluation: <https://peqatac.org/>
- Pre-employment transition services
  - An issue brief on VR agencies' early implementation of pre-employment transition services: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/publications/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies-early-implementation-experiences-with-pre-employment>
  - The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, which provides resources related to pre-employment transition services: <http://www.wintac.org/>

37  **For More Information**

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38  **Seamless Transition and VR Service**

Richard Luecking & Ellen Fabian

Career for Transition and Career Innovation, University of Maryland

39  **One Transition Service Model that Features Early VR Case Service and Work Experience**

Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) interventions:

- Work-based experiences (informed by “discovery” of student characteristics)
- Paid employment
- Early VR agency case initiation
- Systems linkages and collaboration

40  **MSTC Implementation**

- Led by Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) (2007 – 2012)
- Technical assistance from TransCen, Inc.
- 11 county-wide school districts, each with a local interagency team of collaborators
- Participants: eligible for DORS, consent to participate
- Targeted enrollment: 400

41  **Methods**

Electronic administrative case service records extracted from DORS from 10/2007 – 1/2013 for 2 groups:

- All MSTC youth (n=377)
- Non-MSTC youth in MSTC counties (n=6844)

42  **Key Service Findings**

Compared to matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants:

- Received more job training, job search assistance, and on-the-job support services
- Received less assessment and diagnosis/treatment services

43  **Key Service Findings (cont.)**

Compared to matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants:

- Had lower service costs - \$1,096 less on average
- Were more likely to be employed – 55% v. 33%

#### 44 **Implications for VR Transition Service**

- VR use of work experience category of WIOA PETS is likely to yield higher employment outcomes: Counselors and service partners need to learn how work experiences are most effectively facilitated
- Collaboration toward work outcomes maximizes resources and improves likelihood of employment: Pre- and in-service education should emphasize methods and parameters of collaborating with schools, VR vendors, and other community services on behalf of commonly served youth

#### 45 **More Information**

Luecking, R., Fabian, E., Contreary, K., Honeycutt, T., & Luecking, D. (2018). Vocational rehabilitation outcomes for students participating in a model transition program. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 61, 154-163.

Luecking, D., & Luecking, R. (2015). Translating research into a seamless transition model. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38, 4-13.

#### 46 **Exploring the State of Vocational Rehabilitation Practices for Serving Youth** **Specific Practices for Pre-Employment Transition Services**

Todd Honeycutt & Purvi Sevak  
Mathematica

#### 47 **Pre-employment Transition Services**

- Five required services
  - Job exploration counseling
  - Workplace readiness training
  - Work-based learning experiences (WBLEs)
  - Counseling on post-secondary enrollment
  - Instruction in self-advocacy
- VR agencies must spend 15% of their federal funding on these services
- Services must be available to all students with disabilities

#### 48 **Success with Implementation**

Many agencies are



- Connecting with students who are pre-eligible
- Providing a range of services
- Developing innovative programs
- Collaborating with local education agencies, workforce agencies, and community providers
- Monitoring service delivery
- Conducting statewide needs assessments

49  **Challenges with Implementation**

- Reporting service delivery to RSA
- Quantity versus quality
- Statewideness
- Relationships with local education agencies
- Support services for students who are pre-eligible
- Shifting resources to students with disabilities from traditional VR population
- Overlap across service categories

50  **What's Next?**

- What are the best practices for pre-employment transition services?
- Are pre-employment services effective?
- How to develop collaborations with local education agencies?

51  **For More Information**

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52  **Respondents**

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53  **Questions / Comments?**

54  **Thank you!**

[www.vrpracticesandyouth.org](http://www.vrpracticesandyouth.org)