STATE-FEDERAL VR DIRECTOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM CHALLENGES, NEEDS, AND THE FUTURE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

By

Susan G. Sherman

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Rehabilitation Counselor Education - Doctor of Philosophy

2015

ABSTRACT

STATE-FEDERAL VR DIRECTOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM CHALLENGES, NEEDS, AND THE FUTURE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

By

Susan G. Sherman

McFarlane, Schroeder and Enriquez (2014) wrote that the challenge is to ensure continuity in our government support systems for workforce development that addresses both the unique needs of the individual with a disability and the organizational systems through which public policies are carried out. This study sought to understand the challenges and needs of the state-federal VR program from the director's perspective and to determine how these directors see the future of the public VR program. The study provides an in-depth examination of the research question "How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program, and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?" The 12 participants identified for inclusion in this study were state-federal VR directors leading higher-functioning VR agencies, based on three years of RSA 911 data from combined or general VR agencies in the continental United States.

The results indicate that the state-federal VR directors interviewed are collaborating with workforce partners, school systems and other partners to meet the mandates of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Issues and concerns related to agency implementation of WIOA were examined. Creating a better world for people with disabilities was examined in terms of agency actions and policies. VR directors' thoughts on their own training needs, and that of their staff, were shared.

The findings from this study may be able to assist stakeholders in understanding and developing resources and supports that state-federal VR directors believe are needed in order to successfully operate public VR programs into the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to take this opportunity to thank the faculty and staff of the MSU Rehabilitation Counseling program and my committee members, Dr. Michael J. Leahy, Dr. John Kosciulek, Dr. Connie Sung and Dr. Avner Segall, for their patience, guidance and for the many opportunities presented to me during my time at Michigan State University. I especially want to thank my advisor, Dr. Michael J. Leahy, for his wisdom, guidance, and support. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities he has provided to me and for his encouragement and steadfast support. He has shown me the importance of scholarship and of sharing knowledge with others to create a better world for people with disabilities.

I would also like to thank Dr. Leahy and the entire research team, for allowing me to participate and contribute to the literature through the RRTC-EBP-VR NIDRR grant. I wish to acknowledge my research assistant peers, Roy Del Valle and Cayte Anderson, for their support and never-ending encouragement.

I have met so many people during these past few years, many of whom I have met through the Big 3 events coordinated by MSU, Iowa and Penn State faculty. Many of these individuals have become close friends and colleagues, and I thank them for all they have done in enabling me to succeed in my doctoral studies. I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues who encouraged me to pursue this degree.

Most of all, I would like to thank my family for their enduring support of me during these years in Michigan. To my daughter, Sarah, I have been amazed at the lovely young woman you have become during our time here. To my wife, Ann, words alone cannot express my gratitude for all your support and sacrifice during these last few years. I am truly blessed and I shall be

forever grateful to you and for this life we have made together. And, lastly, I would like to thank

my mother, Lori Sherman, who I know is watching over me and would have been extremely

proud of this achievement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AT   Assistive Technology

COLA   Cost of Living Adjustment

CPA   Certified Public Accountant

CRC   Certified Rehabilitation Counselor

CSAVR   Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CVF   Competing Values Framework

DSA   Designated State Agency

DSU   Designated State Unit

EBP   Evidence-Based Practices

FFY   Federal Fiscal Year

FTE   Full-Time Equivalent

HELP   Health, Education, Labor & Pensions

HHS   Health & Human Services

IRB   Institutional Review Board

ICI   Institute for Community Inclusion

IRI   Institute on Rehabilitation Issues

JDVRTAC   Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center

LPC   Licensed Professional Counselor

MOE   Maintenance of Effort

MOU   Memorandum of Understanding

NCSAB   National Council of State Agencies for the Blind

NIDILRR	National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research
NIDRR	National Institute on Disability-Related Research
PETS	Pre-employment Transition Services
PWD	Person with a disability
QA	Quality Assurance
RCEP	Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program
RSA-TAC-15-01	Technical Assistance Circular
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
TA	Technical Assistance
TACE	Technical Assistance and Continuing Education
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Chapter 1

Introduction

Federal legislation has supported the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) program for over 90 years (McFarlane, Schroeder, Enriquez & Dew, 2011). The focus of this legislation has been to enable state-federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to provide services that support people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment and increase independence. While the state-federal VR programs have "been relatively successful at helping people with disabilities obtain and maintain employment, this federal disability program is facing some formidable challenges" (Leahy, Chan & Lui, 2014, p. 84). The strength of the state-federal program today is its focus on policies, mandates and structures designed to identify and meet the needs of the individual with disabilities.

The state-federal VR program, in assisting approximately one million individuals with disabilities with independent living and career goals, spends about three billion dollars annually according to Leahy et al., 2014. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has found that after receiving VR services about half the individuals served were able to obtain employment in integrated settings. Accountability by VR stakeholders for fund expenditures is increasing. State VR directors are responsible, as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, for both the funds they expend and the outcomes their agencies produce. Understanding how state-federal VR directors perceive their resource needs and their own abilities to transform their agencies, in order to improve employment outcomes, may provide insights into how to best support these directors in improving and sustaining VR services. McFarlane et al. noted that the public policy challenge is to balance person-centric principles while creating policies and structures to meet organizational mandates to assist the consumer.

Federal regulations provide the foundation for implementing the state-federal VR policies and services. For most of its history, the state-federal VR program received bipartisan support and this has contributed to longevity of the program. Since the program's inception, the VR program's framework of policy mandates has required commitments and resources at both the state and federal levels and created a system that should be consistent throughout the United States (McFarlane et al., 2011).

McFarlane et al. believe that in order to ensure that public policies are both person-centric and system-centric constant thoughtful consideration, planning and implementation by policymakers, administrators, employers, providers and the person with a disability that endeavors to enter or return to the job market is required. An analysis of the most recent version of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which is now Title IV of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), expands the requirements of the Designated State Unit (DSU) to require that there be a full-time VR director who is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day operations of the state's VR program. The WIOA gives VR directors sole authority and responsibility within the Designated State Agency (DSA), under which the DSU is housed, to expend funds made available under the Act. This language specifically identifies and empowers the VR director as the decision-maker on expenditure of funds on the program's behalf. The State VR Director is the only position specifically outlined in the Act and is responsible for the staff hired. While VR agency staff titles and positions may vary, the State Director's position and responsibilities are clearly outlined in the Act.

Fiscal, legislative and leadership changes at the state and federal levels have, over time, changed the field of rehabilitation services (McFarlane et al., 2011). According to the 2005 document from the 31st Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI), managing a VR system

successfully depends on managing many competing priorities. "Individuals in positions of leadership are being asked to make many decisions, both large and small, in this rapidly changing environment" (McFarlane et al., 2011, p. 5). Bitter and Gay (1997) point out that setting direction with vision, values and creativity requires leadership. Packard (2009) notes that leadership is an important variable that affects the performance of an organization. The leadership behavior of an organization creates, either knowingly or unknowingly, the culture of the organization in which staff operates (Packard, 2009). Rijal (2010) suggests that leadership facilitating a culture allowing for the creation of a learning organization encourages the development, acquisition, transformation and dissemination of new knowledge that can foster innovation leading to evidence-based practices (EBP). Emphasis on the development and implementation of EBPs is needed to assist state-federal VR directors in demonstrating the effectiveness of VR service provision by their agencies. Creating cultures that transform agencies into learning organizations and that empower staff towards innovation appears to be a critical and necessary step (Sherman et al., 2014).

Shaw, Leahy and Catalano (2006) noted that "challenges to the profession of rehabilitation counseling have frequently been cited in the rehabilitation counseling literature." These researchers reported the results of a Delphi study with a wide variety of leaders in the field that included leaders of the various professional organizations, accreditation and certification bodies. The results of this study were classified into "five domains of issues which included: professional identity and recognition; changes in service delivery systems; education and training issues; research; and professional association issues" (Shaw et al., 2006, p. 177). The goal of this study was to provide the profession with guidance in developing agendas and strategies that will address the critical issues facing the profession.

In another recent study, Sherman, Leahy, Del Valle, Anderson, Tansey and Lui (2014) revealed "organizational practices, culture and structural elements encourage and support the development of innovative and effective service delivery practices" (Leahy et al., 2014, p. 85). McFarlane, Schroeder and Enriquez (2014) wrote that the challenge is to ensure continuity in our government support systems for workforce development that addresses both the unique needs of the individual with a disability and the organizational systems through which public policies are carried out. This study proposes to look at state-federal VR directors, those individuals charged with carrying out the mandates and goals of the state-federal VR program. While the literature addresses the perspectives of a wide variety of leaders in the field, this study will extend research in the field by exploring state-federal VR directors' insights on the future of the VR program and what these directors believe they need to successfully address the complex and ever-changing demands on their agencies.

Statement of Problem

"The challenges of vocational rehabilitation have never been more evident, nor the need for more and better VR services been greater" (McMahon & Chan, 2011, p. 189). State-federal VR directors have the responsibility to assure that funds, expended by the staff they hire, are used to support program success for agency clients. Sherman et al. (2014) found there is a clear link between leadership style and management practice, and these factors have a significant influence on the adoption of innovation and utilization of evidence-based practices within state-federal VR agencies. Leaders of successful VR agencies "emphasize the use of outcome-focused business models by adopting organizational innovations and harnessing advances in information technologies to deliver outcomes that individuals, communities and society at large value" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 151).

4

Given the changes over time to the state VR program, including recent changes brought about by the recently passed WIOA legislation, this study examines the administration of a state-federal VR program from the State Director's perspective that may provide an insider's point of view of the challenges and, in turn, the needs of the state-federal VR program. These directors are uniquely situated to provide insight into the program's future direction and how state directors perceive the national program needs to adapt in continuing the provision of quality services. These insights may provide a roadmap for potential changes that VR agencies and their stakeholders could undertake over time to improve their agency's performance outcomes, especially in light of state budget cuts and the diminishing availability of training dollars.

Purpose of Study

According to Sherman et al. (2014), in order to achieve VR program success in times of change, leaders should strive to create a culture of adhocracy that supports a learning organization. Organizational culture is one of the management tools available to leaders of organizations that can shape employee performance (Giberson et al., 2009; Lincoln, 2010; Sherman et al., 2014). In an attempt to define organizational culture in relation to organizational learning, Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed the Competing Values Framework (CVF). Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) explained CVF in terms of two primary dimensions that include four major quadrants representing opposite assumptions. Dimension 1 ranges from flexibility and discretion to stability and control in the organization. Dimension 2 ranges from internal focus and integration to external focus and differentiation in the organization. The four major quadrants, as depicted in Figure 1, are defined by these two axes, labeled as clan, market, hierarchy and adhocracy (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Naranjo-Valencia, Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Sherman et al., 2014).
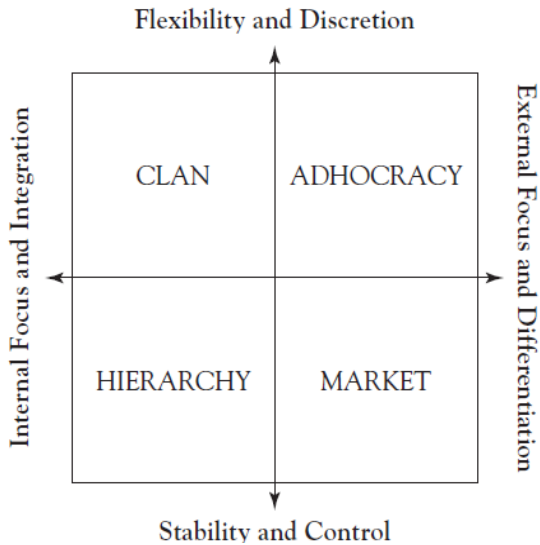
Source: Cameron and Quinn (1999)

Figure 1. Competing Values Framework (CVF)

Leaders in adhocracy systems value innovation and building partnerships with external stakeholders. Adhocracy culture is externally focused and emphasizes flexibility or dynamism, adaptability and change. Decision-making is decentralized and creativity, entrepreneurship and risk-taking are expected and valued. In this culture, teams are formed around projects and communication flows up the chain of command. Such a culture promotes survival in an uncertain, ambiguous and turbulent environment (Lincoln, 2010; Millington & Schultz, 2009; Sanz-Valle et al., 2011; Sherman et al., 2014). The decisions that state-federal VR directors make, who these leaders are, and the resources needed to support informed decisions will be the topic of this dissertation. "Reliance on past experience and expertise will not be sufficient to lead the public rehabilitation of the future" (McFarlane et al., 2011, p. 11).

Based on the CVF, Quinn in 1984 developed a model to organize the literature on leadership. From his work, eight categories of leader behavior or roles emerged. Figure 2 shows how these eight roles fit into his existing framework on organizational effectiveness. Each of the quadrants reflects core management skills. The upper left quadrant is the human relations model

that encourages teamwork, cohesiveness and interpersonal conflict. In the upper right quadrant, the innovator is creative and encourages adaptation and change, while the broker role is persuasive, influential and politically astute. The lower right quadrant shows the producer who is task-oriented and work-focused, encouraging production to accomplish goals. The lower left quadrant coordinator maintains structure, coordinates staff efforts and attends to housekeeping issues while monitoring performance and paperwork. While managers are expected to play all of these roles, effective managers have the ability to perform multiple roles and balance competing demands (Dennison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995). Executives who exhibit a greater variety of leadership roles have been found to be more effective than their less effective counterparts (Dennison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995). Leaders who were perceived as more effective by their staff and others tended to perform leadership functions more frequently than those that were seen as performing other roles (Hooijberg, 1996).
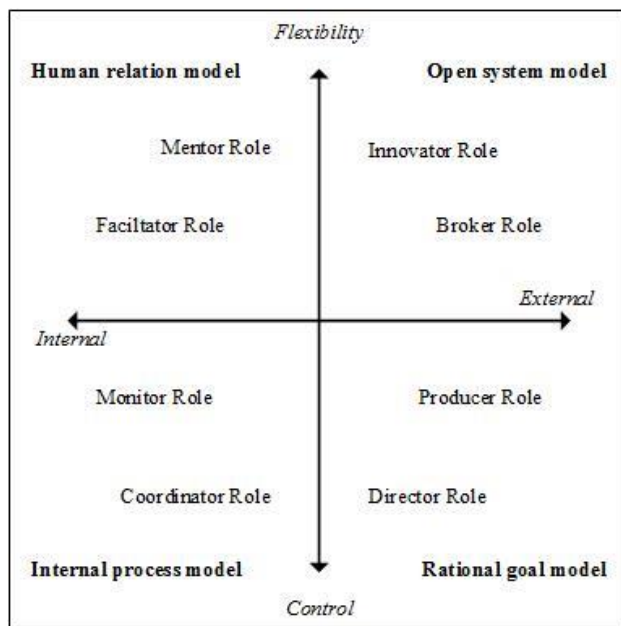
Figure 2. Competing Values Framework: Organizational Effectiveness (Quinn, 1984)

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth examination and discussion of the findings from a qualitative multiple case study of 13 state-federal VR directors, selected from

general and combined agencies in the continental United States, who lead higher-performing state-federal VR programs. The findings from this study may assist stakeholders in understanding and developing resources and supports that the state-federal VR directors believe are needed in order to successfully operate public VR programs into the future. The study may also help administrators of state-federal VR agencies gain insights that could potentially enhance the future of the public rehabilitation program.

Research Question

The primary research question that will guide this study is:

How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program, and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?

The structured interview guide and research questions have been adapted from questions in the publication entitled Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (2005) and from questions in the article by McFarlane, Schroeder & Enriquez (2014).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 depicts how funding and expectations flow through legislation to fund state-federal VR agencies, from various state, federal and private stakeholders, and those agencies' expectation of accountability for funding and service provision. In order to obtain funding, there are expectations for accountability that flow to the state-federal VR agency to the VR director, through whom the organization's culture can create a learning organization that may enable staff to provide evidence-based services to agency customers, thereby facilitating the opportunity (successful) outcomes, which in turn can provide the accountability the funders are expecting for

8

continued financial support of the legislation, enabling VR agencies to continue to provide
services to agency customers.
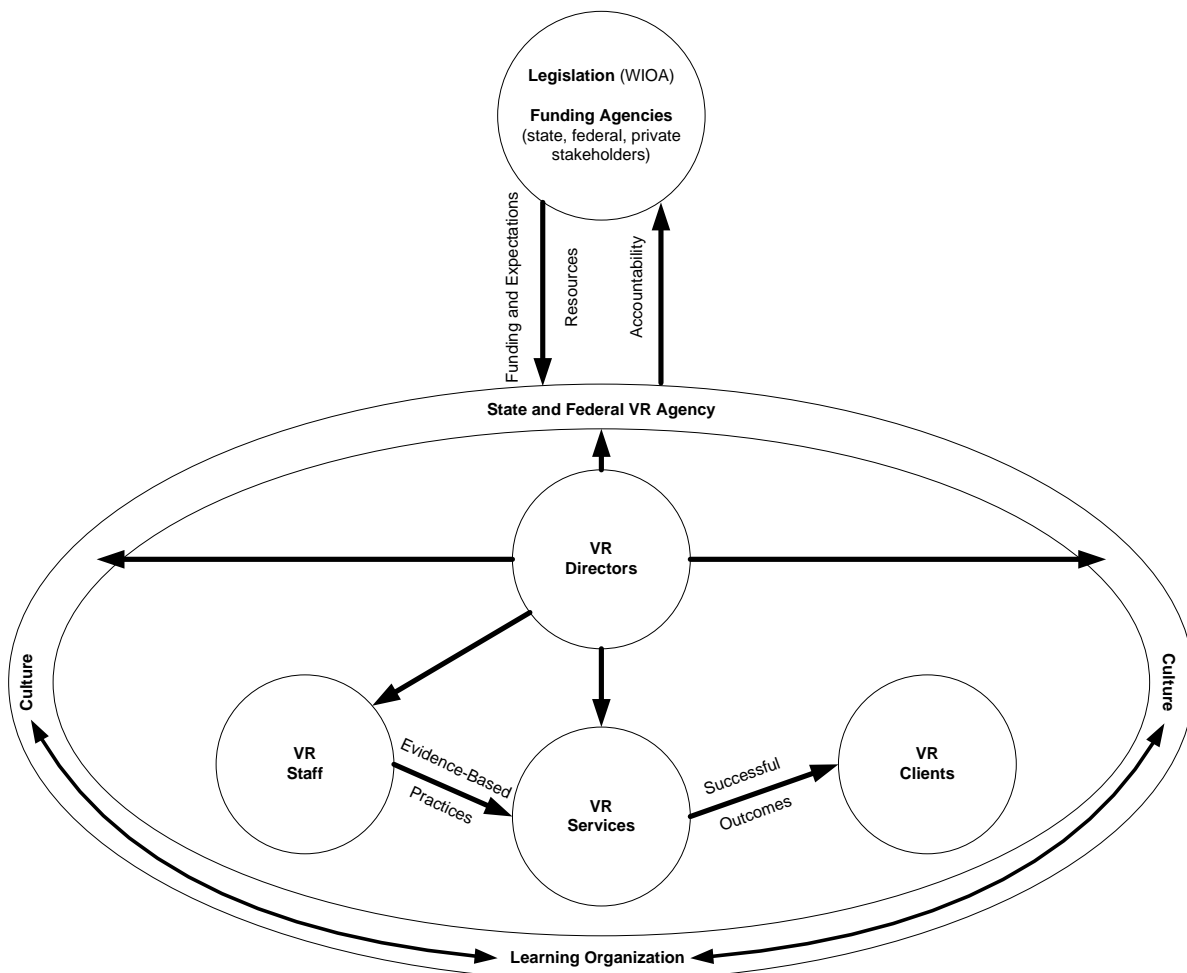
Figure 3. Conceptual Framework

Summary

In resource-limited environments, evidence of efficacy and effectiveness can help leaders
make programmatic funding decisions so agencies can show that the services they provide work
(Brannon, 2010). The state-federal VR program has been continually challenged to demonstrate
the effectiveness of VR services provided to eligible customers. The emphasis on the
development and implementation of EBPs is needed to assist state-federal VR agencies in
demonstrating the effectiveness of VR service provision. Executive leadership sets the tone to

create cultures that have the potential to transform agencies into learning organizations that empower staff towards innovation. Leadership continuity will also become a highly significant factor in the sustainability of these types of enabling organizational cultures. Leaders of VR agencies must develop a foundation of EBPs that lead to competitive employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Today, such practices are in need of metrics that can prove they work. Finding ways to measure the outcomes of organizational strategies implemented by state-federal VR directors is necessary to provide the level of empirical evidence of success to all the stakeholders in the state/federal VR program. Given the variability of outcomes in state-federal VR programs, the perceptions of state-federal VR directors about the future of VR and the resources needed to operate their programs successfully is important for the future of the program and to the various stakeholders of state-federal VR programs. The research conducted through this study may give those in the field of rehabilitation and VR program stakeholders a better understanding of what state-federal VR directors, the only position required by the Rehabilitation Act, believe is necessary to sustain and continue to grow this important public program.

Definition of Terms

- Adhocracy Culture

  Organizational culture places importance on flexibility and innovation. Adaptability and quick reactions to the changing market, competition and external environment are integral components of corporate strategy in this type of business. Leadership in an adhocracy culture is demonstrated by entrepreneurship and risk-taking. The emphasis is always on growth opportunities and employees are encouraged to experiment with new ideas.

- Competing Values Framework (CVF)

  A model of four distinct culture types, developed by Cameron & Quinn, that include hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy cultures.

- Designated State Unit (DSU)

  The state agency or the bureau, division or other organizational unit within a state agency that is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities and that is responsible for the administration of the VR program of the state agency; or the independent state commission, board or other agency that has the vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities as its primary function.

- Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)

  Evidence-based practice refers to the use of research and scientific studies as a base for determining the best practices in a field.

- Federal Indicators

  The evaluation standards used to assess each DSU to evaluate a DSU's performance in serving individuals with disabilities under the VR program.

- Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)

  Federal year which funding runs from October 1 through September 30 each year.

- General and Combined Agencies

  State-federal vocational rehabilitation agencies that are inclusive of programs for the blind (combined) or exclude services to the blind (general).

- Higher-Functioning VR Agencies

  Designed State Units that within a three-fiscal-year time period achieve at least one six

and no less than a five out of the six evaluation standard indicators used to assess successful performance of state-federal VR programs.

- Learning Organization

  Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

- Rehabilitation Act (of 1973, as amended)

  Federal legislation that authorizes the formula grant programs of vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living and client assistance. It also authorizes a variety of training and service discretionary grants administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

  Federal agency that oversees grant programs that help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently through the provision of such supports as counseling, medical and psychological services, job training and other individualized services. RSA's major Title I formula grant program provides funds to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to provide employment-related services for individuals with disabilities, giving priority to individuals who are significantly disabled.

- State-Federal VR Director

  Individual who has the sole authority under the Rehabilitation Act for the state level day-to-day operations of the vocational rehabilitation program.

- VR Outcomes

  Outcomes, measured by federal indicators, in determining the success of a state-federal VR program.

- Vocational Rehabilitation

  Program that provides grants to states to support a wide range of services designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Eligible individuals are those who have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment, who can benefit from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for employment, and who require VR services. Priority must be given to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities if a state is unable to serve all eligible individuals.

- VR Stakeholders

  Individuals, organizations and funding agencies that have an interest in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

- Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA)

  Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, now known as Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which was signed into law in 2014 (H.R. 803).

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

<center>**Literature Review**</center>

The State-Federal Rehabilitation Program and Related Legislation

      The Soldiers Rehabilitation Act in 1918 was the first federal legislation that focused on veterans returning from World War I with injuries and permanent disabilities. Those disabilities presented significant barriers to a veteran's ability to become reemployed back in the civilian workforce. Rehabilitation programs and services promoted physical recovery and the building of new work skills in order for those veterans to return to employment. The State-Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program originated through federal legislation in 1920 with the Smith-Fess Act (Patterson, Bruyere, Szymanski & Jenkins, 2005; Rubin & Roessler, 2008; Wright, 1980) and remains over 94 years later the primary public sector provider of VR services for individuals with significant disabilities in this country. Vocational rehabilitation legislation has been focused on providing vocational guidance, vocational education, occupational adjustment and job placement services to individuals with physical disabilities. The Smith-Fess Act established a funding mechanism of a 50-50 matching of funds from the federal government as an incentive to states to pass VR laws and create their own public VR agencies (Rubin & Roessler, 2001).

Growth of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

      The years after World War II saw significant growth of vocational rehabilitation programs for veterans with disabilities. Although individuals with disabilities were marginalized in American society at that time, wartime labor shortages created opportunities that allowed individuals with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities to work and be productive in mainstream society. Through the passing of the Barden-LaFollette Act in 1943, the United

<center>14</center>

States acknowledged that a variety of groups of people with disabilities, including people with mental illness, mental retardation and blindness, could benefit from the VR program and Congress provided additional federal funding for VR programs (Rubin & Roessler, 2008; Wright, 1980).

The Golden Era of Rehabilitation began in the 1950s, with significant expansion of the public VR program (Golden, Bruyere, Karpur, Nazarov & VanLooy, 2012; Rubin & Roessler, 2008, p. 32; Rusalem & Malikin, 1976). "Funding quadrupled for public rehabilitation between 1954 and 1965. The share of federal funding increased by 50 percent to $3 for every $2 of state dollars" (Rubin & Roessler, 2008, p. 33). During this time period, funding expanded for rehabilitation research, demonstration grants and rehabilitation facility development. These research and development grants allowed state VR agencies and nonprofit organizations to explore new areas of knowledge within the rehabilitation field (Rubin & Roessler, 2008). Federal funding ratios to the 36 state VR agencies continued to increase to a level of 80% to 20% at this time and allowed facilities and community rehabilitation programs to increase the number individuals with disabilities served (Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Amendments

Landmark legislation, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, retained the 80-20 ratio of federal to state funding (Rubin & Roessler, 2008) and reaffirmed the rights of individuals with disabilities. This legislation prioritized services to individuals with severe disabilities. It encouraged consumer involvement in the VR process and required program evaluation to measure program outcomes. Over the years, amendments to this legislation encouraged more research in rehabilitation and reaffirmed the need for training of qualified rehabilitation counselors through the funding of rehabilitation. Reauthorizations of the Rehabilitation Act, and

its implementing regulations, called for expansion of federal funding for further rehabilitation programs and services, such as independent living centers, and emphasized the serving of individuals with severe disabilities (Rubin & Roessler, 2008). The Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1986 promoted community integration for people with disabilities, development of Client Assistance Programs and rehabilitation technology and engineering, as well as supported employment (Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

The Workforce Investment Act and Ticket to Work

The 1990s saw consumer choice and the goal of integrated employment in the 1992 and 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Golden et al., 2012). In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) strengthened the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in mainstream society (Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1990). In 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, of which the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, became Title IV. The new legislation mandated consolidation and integration of the country's Workforce programs into a one-stop delivery system in an effort to improve service outcomes (Dorrer, 2001; Rubin & Roessler, 2008). Under WIA, the state-federal vocational rehabilitation programs maintained their independent identities but were expected to coordinate with other federally funded vocational training programs through cooperative agreements. In 1999, President Clinton signed into law the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). While this legislation was not officially part of the workforce investment system, it addressed policy barriers for Social Security (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSDI) recipients. It created Employment Networks (ENs) to give consumers a choice of providers, including the State-Federal VR Program. Payments to VR programs changed from an entirely cost reimbursement process to programs having a choice when successfully working

with SSI or SSDI recipients of either receiving the traditional method of payment or milestone

payments. It also gave consumers the choice of working with VR or another EN organization

(Dorrer, 2001; Golden et al., 2012; Rubin & Roessler, 2008).

Twenty-First Century Legislation

In the 21st century, state-federal vocational rehabilitation agencies "experienced

downward trends across four key performance indicators, including percentages of individuals

with significant disabilities who achieve an employment outcome with earnings; percentages of

individuals receiving SSI/SSDI with an employment outcome with earnings; average earnings of

individuals who receive SSI/SSDI at application; and percentages of transition age youths who

achieve an employment outcome with earnings" (Golden et al., 2012, p. 11).

In July 2008, the Social Security Administration (SSA) revised the regulations covering

TWWIIA. SSA "relaxed earning thresholds and time requirements" for ENs and streamlined the

requirement to become an EN (Golden et al., 2012, p. 13). In 2012, Senator Tom Harkin, who

served on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee,

published a report on "the dismal disability employment situation" and called on Congress to

"elevate this issue into a national priority" (Harkin, 2012, p. 1).

Beginning in March 2011, the HELP committee conducted hearings on the topic of

employment for people with disabilities. The report suggested that there is a need to rethink the

way all programs that support people with disabilities are structured. The report made clear that

integrated competitive employment needs to be the goal. The recession of 2008 dramatically

affected employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. As the economy began to

rebound, workers with disabilities did not experience the same recovery in employment as

people without disabilities. "In 2012, the employment rate for people with disabilities was

32.7% compared to individuals without disabilities who had an employment rate of 73.6%,"

which equals an "employment gap of 40.8%" (Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on

Disability Statistics and Demographics, 2013, p. 26). In addition to issues of unemployment,

underemployment still remains a factor for people with disabilities. In federal fiscal year 2011,

the United States spent over 3.9 billion dollars for VR services expenditures on people with

disabilities (Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and

Demographics, 2013). According to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational

Rehabilitation (CSAVR), in fiscal year 2011, VR programs assisted 178,188 individuals with

disabilities in achieving an employment goal. This was a 9% increase from fiscal year 2010

(CSAVR, 2013).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

In order to continue to address the employment the outlook for people with disabilities, in

2014 Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (H.R. 803, 2014).

The final version of the WIOA was a compromise bill between the SKILLS Act (H.R. 803),

passed by the U.S. House in 2013, and the Workforce Investment Act of 2013 (S. 1356), which

was passed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee also in 2013

(Schroeder, 2014). A section-by-section review of the WIOA legislation shows that within the

WIOA, Title IV reauthorizes amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and adds specific

requirements. The Rehabilitation Act has been due for reauthorization since 2003. This new bill

requires state VR programs to submit a unified or combined state plan to the secretaries of

Education and Labor for approval instead of to the RSA Commissioner. The WIOA creates a

new section for the provision of pre-employment transition services. It requires a 15% set-aside

for provision of such services. This new legislation creates additional monitoring and review

criteria and greatly expands the services VR agencies provide to employers. New standards and

performance indicators will be established to replace those created by the RSA commissioner

under WIA. A requirement was added to clarify responsibilities for service delivery for those

individuals receiving services from both employment networks and state rehabilitation services.

Other new requirements outline expectations for cooperative agreements with other state

agencies serving people with disabilities. WIOA changed the Comprehensive System of

Personnel Development to include provisions for a bachelor's degree in a field of study

reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation or attainment of a master's or doctoral degree in

certain fields of study. Appropriations for state vocational rehabilitation programs under the new

WIOA legislation is level-funded for each of the next five years and the cost-of-living

adjustment (COLA) is added to the base and is guaranteed (Schroeder, 2014).

In addition to the changes to the Rehabilitation Act, funding for training of rehabilitation

personnel has now become part of the program's general appropriation. Another resource that

has been available to address the training needs of public rehabilitation personnel has been the

Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers (TACE). These programs will sunset

September 30, 2014. To date, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services

(OSERS) has announced a priority for one national Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation

Technical Assistance Center which primarily looks to serve the training needs of employers.

WIOA moves both Independent Living programs and what was the National Institute for

Disability-Related Research (NIDRR) from the Department of Education to the Department of

Health & Human Services (HHS) and adds Independent Living to its title to become the National

Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (H.R. 803, 2014). It is

too early to tell how this move will impact research dollars for vocational rehabilitation program services.

Leadership of State-Federal Rehabilitation Programs

As resources have tightened and services have expanded over the years to an ever-increasing pool of individuals with a variety of disabilities, the public rehabilitation program is faced with increasing demands on rehabilitation agency leadership. Rehabilitation leaders must find ways to increase the number of individuals, with a wide variety of disabilities, to become successfully employed in integrated job settings. "Despite the development and enhancement of public policies promoting workforce development and employment participation over the past three decades, individuals with disabilities continue to experience disparate workforce participation rates and lower earnings than their non-disabled peers" (Golden et al., 2012, p. 16). Golden et al. state there is a need for workforce partners to focus on identification of promising and evidence-based practices leading to increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Areas for research outlined by Golden et al. include systems integration, data sharing, collaboration and partnerships, shared expertise and vocational rehabilitation. In order to achieve the legislative objectives, there is a need for "continued focus on redefining organizational culture and evolving systems capacities to meet complex challenges faced by individuals with disabilities who want to work" (Golden et al., 2012, p. 16). Forward movement in rehabilitation will be a function of leadership and Saleh states that it will need to include self-appraisal and the desire to make a positive difference (Saleh, 1991). Even in times of change, leaders must work on the system, creating opportunities as well as energy and excitement. Vision, values and creativity should be used by leaders when in setting direction (Daniels, 1997). One question needing to be proposed to rehabilitation leaders is "what options are most needed

and practical to insure that most or all can perform these critical jobs when they enter them and throughout their tenure?" (Simon, 1991, p. 209). No longer is reactionary leadership enough. According to Saleh, rehabilitation leaders must be able to: (1) Be dedicated to self-improvement and professional development; (2) Communicate clearly to create the "voice" of rehabilitation; (3) Develop followers who are dedicated to the future of the field; (4) Bridge the gap with outside entities; and (5) Foster the development of in-service education (Saleh, 1991). "The most formidable obstacle to rehabilitation efforts to fulfill its function to the fullest lies with creating capable, effective leadership" (Saleh, 1991, p. 212). There have been a number of articles that discuss rehabilitation leadership competencies and how those attributes can contribute to creating high-performing organizations (Atkinson, 1997; Atkinson & Bitter, 1997; Ford, 1997). Through competent leadership, public rehabilitation agencies can meet the challenges in an ever-changing political and legislative landscape. "As change accelerates, the need for leadership also accelerates" (Saleh, 1991, p. 211). According to Atkinson, leaders, not organizations, create excellence (Atkinson, 1997).

Funding is a major factor among the many challenges facing state-federal rehabilitation agency leaders. Though costs have increased, since the early 1990s state-federal rehabilitation agencies have essentially been level-funded (O'Brien & Graham, 2009). There has always been "a need to balance existing need against available resources" (Shaw, 1997, p. 296). Today, leaders of state-federal rehabilitation programs must find creative ways to obtain diminishing state dollars in order to bring down their allotted federal match dollars. In the age WIOA, training dollars used for staff development will now be part of an agency's general allotment and, of the agency's allotment, 15% is now required to be set aside for pre-employment transition services (Schroeder, 2014). The WIOA includes language that may allow for staff

21

with less than the state or national standard for rehabilitation counselors or other personnel. By definition, those individuals may need additional training to understand disability-related issues in order to be successful with agency clients.

"Understanding the industry" (Atkinson, 1997, p. 251) is critical to moving rehabilitation agencies forward. At the agency director level, this means understanding the political environments one must operate in. Individuals in positions of executive leadership must help their organizations adapt to often complex changes. Those "organizations which adapt to turbulent external changes are those more likely to survive" (Latta, 1981, p. 51). "The successful rehabilitation leader must be an expert in rehabilitation matters, total community efforts, and operations and collaborative efforts with sister agencies; at the same time he or she must understand the political, economic, and social elements of power as well" (Daniels, 1997, p. 245). "The challenges of vocational rehabilitation have never been more evident, nor the need for more and better VR services been greater" (McMahon & Chan, 2011, p. 189). In this climate of fast-paced change, the need for evidence-based practices is crucial to support the work that state-federal VR agencies provide. In an age of accountability, state-federal VR directors must develop organizational climates that create learning organization and utilize evidence-based practices (Daniels, 1997).

Evidence-Based Practices

There has been an expectation in recent years on state-federal VR programs to demonstrate accountability for employment outcomes of those served by the state-federal system through the development and use of evidence-based practices. There is now an increased focus on research dedicated to improving practice and the translation, dissemination and utilization of that knowledge throughout the 83 state-federal agencies that represent the public VR program.

The emphasis of the National Institute of Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation

Research (NIDILRR) on knowledge translation of research findings into practice highlights the

paucity of evidence-based practice and sets the agenda for the work that needs to be done. As

indicated by Pruett, Swett, Chan, Rosenthal and Lee (2008), the powerful question posed by Paul

(1967) years ago, "*What* treatment, by *whom*, is most effective for *this* individual with *that*

specific problem, and under *which* set of circumstances?" (p. 111), remains for the most part

unanswered within the public rehabilitation program (Leahy, Thielsen, Millington, Austin &

Fleming, 2009; Sherman et al., 2014).

Although federal mandates from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for

public VR programs initially focused on the design of program evaluation systems and the

collection, analysis and reporting of data on the impact of services, the focus has evolved over

the years to emphasize how these data are used for continuous improvement in the delivery of

services and the outcomes achieved. In recent years there has also been increased attention on

the concepts of quality assurance systems or plans, evidenced-based practice (EBP), and

knowledge translation (KT) efforts within the health care, disability and rehabilitation arenas.

These initiatives are associated with the use of quantitative and qualitative data obtained through

research and evaluation efforts to inform policy, practice and continuous improvement strategies

for organizations that serve people with disabilities. One of the most critical issues that affects

the quality and usefulness of program evaluation, research and continuous improvement efforts

is the degree to which the leadership and management of the organization value such efforts.

Sherman et al. (2014) state that this is similar to the development of a learning culture within

organizations that creates and sustains an environment that supports the creation of best

practices, provides the resources to rigorously examine the impact of these promising practices

and interventions on employment outcomes of the consumers they serve." Leahy et al. in 2009 stated that if the state director in a public rehabilitation program does not value and invest in program evaluation and research efforts, those activities will be minimally effective and only serve to satisfy compliance with regulatory standards.

Culture

Culture is the "medium through which leadership travels and impacts organizational performance" (Packard, 2009, p. 154). Culture is closely tied to an organization's top leadership. An organization's culture guides the organization's behavior (Giberson et al., 2009). One of the definitions of organizational culture is the "organizational values, beliefs and hidden assumptions that organizational members have in common" (Sanz-Valle, Naranjo-Valencia, Jimenez-Jimenez & Perez-Caballero, 2011, p. 999). Culture provides shared meanings and helps interpret information provided and events that occur in the organization (Giberson et al., 2009). "Meaning and information are then passed down and taught to new members as a way of handling organizational problems" (Sherman et al., 2014).

"Culture can influence employee views of what is and what is not important, it allows an individual to develop knowledge that can impact organizational learning, and it creates processes by which knowledge is created, approved and distributed" (Sherman et al., 2014). Schein (1984) defined different levels of organizational culture as basic assumptions that are unconsciously-held learned responses. Schein (1984) believes learned responses determine (1) how group members perceive, think and feel; (2) values and beliefs that are part of an individual's consciously held concepts that are used to justify beliefs and actions; and (3) objects and physical settings that include office layouts and organizational symbols. "Leaders rely on these

cultural precepts to manage people, to develop strategy and to implement organizational change" (Sherman et al., 2014).

Schultz (2008) noted that culture was the collective practice of the organization. He stated that "organizations thrive when the organizational culture facilitates buy-in, creativity, and personal involvement of professional staff (p. 40)." The culture of an organization influences the behavior of those in the organization and can serve as a mechanism for bringing employees together to enhance organizational goals and increase productivity (Schraeder, Tears & Jordan, 2005). In organizations, culture is the shared meaning and understanding of the organization (Giberson et al., 2009). Sherman et al. (2014) stated that "organizational culture affects all facets of the organization including policies, procedures, and operational strategies." The culture of an organization can help or hinder an organization's ability to accept change, be innovative and encourage and create new knowledge from which employees can be more productive and meet customer need (Rijal, 2010; Schraeder et al., 2005; Brown, 1992). The development of the organization as a learning environment is determined by the organization's culture, which can also impact organizational innovation (Sherman et al., 2014).

Leadership, Culture and the Learning Organization

Transitioning state VR agencies from administrative entities (Herbert, 2004; Herbert & Trusty, 2006; Schultz, 2007; Schultz, 2008; Bezyak, Ososkie, Trice & Yeager, 2010) into learning organizations that develop and promote evidence-based service delivery practices is necessary to enhancing program outcomes and creating environments that facilitate innovation. Learning organizations develop new knowledge and insight from the common experiences of its employees and has the potential to promote positive behaviors and improve the organization's capabilities (Sanz-Valle, Naranjo-Valencia, Jimenez-Jimenez & Perez-Caballero, 2011).

Learning organizations are better at retaining staff, encouraging innovation and developing evidence-based practices to improve organizational performance (Schultz, 2007; Packard, 2009). According to Sessa and London (2006), three levels of learning occur within organizations: (1) Adaptive learning occurs when an organization reacts to and attempts to resolve an issue in a manner that is not conscious or reflective in nature, (2) Generative learning occurs when individuals seek out new knowledge about a subject or issue, and (3) Transformational learning occurs when a group of individuals experience a shift in the way they perceive their environment (Mezirow, 2000; Schultz, 2007). The greatest benefit for an organization occurs through generative and transformational learning (Schultz, 2007).

De Long and Fahey (2000) suggest that culture shapes organizational learning in four ways: "(1) culture shapes employee assumptions about whether knowledge is important or not and what knowledge is worth managing, (2) culture allows individual knowledge to become organizational knowledge, (3) culture shapes the processes by which new knowledge is created, legitimated and distributed, and (4) culture creates the context for social interaction that ultimately determines how effective an organization can be at creating, sharing and applying knowledge."

In an attempt to define organizational culture in relation to organizational learning, Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The CVF is an extremely useful tool for analyzing organizational culture and designing a course for changing such culture in a way to effectively promote sweeping strategic initiatives (Lincoln, 2010). Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) explained CVF in terms of two major dimensions that included four major quadrants representing opposite assumptions. Dimension 1 ranges from flexibility and discretion to stability and control in the organization. Dimension 2 ranges from internal

focus and integration to external focus and differentiation in the organization. The four major

quadrants defined by these two axes are labeled as clan, market, hierarchy and adhocracy

(Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Naranjo-Valencia, Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011). Figure 2

illustrates the CVF model.

"Clan culture is collaborative in nature, has an emphasis on flexibility, internal

maintenance, teamwork, employee involvement, empowerment, cohesion, participation, and

corporate commitment to employees. In this culture, leaders and management encourage

mentoring, nurturing, trust, and sharing. Market culture is externally focused and decision-

making is based on data analysis. The emphasis is on productivity, profitability, market share

and winning" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 117). Leaders and managers are strategic, competitive,

and results-oriented (Giberson et al., 2009; Lincoln, 2010; Sanz-Valle et al., 2011; Millington &

Schultz, 2009).

	Flexibility and Discretion		
Internal focus and integration	Clan	Adhocracy	External focus and differentiation
	Hierarchy	Market	
	Stability and Control		

Figure 4. Competing Values Map (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983)

"Hierarchical culture focuses on the internal organization (i.e., structured bureaucracy)

and is control-oriented. Decision-making is centralized with information coming down through

27

the chain of command" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 118). In hierarchical systems, the use of authority by those in administrative roles, efficiency, cost containment, and compliance to rules are of paramount importance (Sanz-Valle et al., 2011; Millington & Schultz, 2009). "Conversely, adhocracy is externally focused and emphasizes flexibility or dynamism, adaptability, and change. Decision-making is decentralized and creativity, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking are expected and valued. In this culture, teams are formed around projects and communication flows up the chain of command. As a result, leaders and managers in adhocracy systems value innovation and building partnerships with external stakeholders" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 118). Such culture promotes survival in an uncertain, ambiguous, and turbulent environment (Lincoln, 2010; Millington & Schultz, 2009; Sanz-Valle et al., 2011).

Different organizational cultures have different impacts on organizational learning (Sanz-Valle et al., 2011). Leaders in these programs have often overseen hierarchical cultures (Millington & Schultz, 2009) that focus on internal organization and control (Giberson et al., 2009). Sherman et al. (2014) state that characteristics of these types of hierarchical cultures include following the rules, regulations and norms. They go on to state that leadership styles emphasizing this type of culture has negative effects on learning and therefore does not encourage movement to a learning organization.

The Culture of Leadership

No matter how large the organization, agency leaders need to develop an organizational culture that encourages innovation at all levels and creates a learning environment leading to sustainable synergy. Leadership of an organization can be defined as "the process by which leaders influence the attitudes, behaviors, values of others toward organizational goals" (Chi, Lan & Dorjgotov, 2012, p. 1015) or a "process by which an individual influences a group of

individuals to achieve common goals" (Packard, 2009, p. 144). The effect of leadership

behaviors on organizational culture is of importance to organizational success and effectiveness.

Leadership is an important variable that affects the performance of an organization (Packard,

2009). The leadership behavior of an organization creates, either knowingly or unknowingly, the

culture of the organization in which staff operates (Packard, 2009). Leadership that facilitates a

culture that allows for the creation of a learning organization encourages the development,

acquisition, transformation, and dissemination of new knowledge that can foster innovation

leading to effective best practices (Rijal, 2010).

Organizational culture is one of the management tools available to leaders of

organizations to shape employee performance (Lincoln, 2010; Giberson et al., 2009). Culture

can improve employee performance by reducing job stress and enhancing the confidence and

commitment of employees (Lincoln, 2010; Shahzad, Luqman, Khan & Shabbir, 2012).

Schein (1984, 1992, 1993, 1997) has done extensive research into organizational culture

and leadership. Schein suggests that organizational learning should be looked at in terms of an

organization's culture (Schein, 1992, 1993; Lucas & Kline, 2008). In his basic model, Schein

noted that behaviors, values and basic assumptions, such as ways of thinking, perceiving and

reacting, are powerful forces that stabilize organizations (Shahzad et al., 2012). The

convergence of attitudes, behaviors and values of those in an organization is considered

leadership (Chi, Lan & Dorjgotov, 2012). Schein believes that leadership, particularly at the

chief executive or director level, is tied to an organization's culture. The leadership of an

organization, through strategic and operational decisions, forms the basis of shared values and

assumptions that form an organization's culture (Giberson et al., 2009).

The "personality traits of leaders influence culture and are one way to understand the connection between the leader and his/her organization" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 118). Bass (1985) defined a transformational leader as "one who motivates followers to do more than they originally expected to do." Transformational leaders expand and can change the interests of their followers, and generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the organization. Transformational leadership consisted of three components: (1) charismatic leadership, where the leader exhibits behaviors that subordinates admire and appreciate; (2) intellectual stimulation, where the leader encourages innovation and creativity; and (3) individualized consideration, where the leader finds ways for followers to identify goals and enables opportunities to achieve those goals (Packard, 2009). Bass believes that transformational leaders, who believe in the principle of power with rather than power over, make strategic and operational decisions that impact the culture of their organizations and influence those who work within the culture. Transformational leaders encourage creation of learning environments that support staff in implementing best practices that lead to greater organizational success (Tuft, 2012).

Senge (1994) popularized the term "learning organization" in the 1990s in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. He identified three leadership roles needed to build a learning organization: leaders as designers, leaders as teachers, and leaders as stewards (Senge, 1994). Support of innovation, transformation and change is required to create a transformational culture (Sherman et al, 2014). Leaders of learning organizations must provide a clear and attractive vision of the organization's future that creates commitment from followers in achieving goals (Warrick, 2011). Transformational leaders see a need for change, create a new vision and obtain from followers a commitment to organizational change (Rijal, 2010). Rijal believes these leaders

work with their followers to embrace uncertainty and facilitate followers' understanding of the goals of the learning organization. Transformational leaders build commitment and then set about empowering their followers to "look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group" (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004, p. 350). In order to transform their organization, transformational leaders recognize the need for change, create a new vision and institute the change (Warrick, 2011; Yang, Wu, Chang & Chien, 2011).

Leadership in Times of Change

The state-federal VR program has been challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of VR services provided to eligible customers. In resource-limited environments, evidence of efficacy and effectiveness can help make programmatic funding decisions so that agencies can show that the services they provide work (Brannon, 2010). The emphasis on the development and implementation of EBPs is needed to assist state-federal VR agencies in demonstrating the effectiveness of VR service provision. Executive leadership sets the tone to create cultures that can transform agencies into learning organizations and that empower staff towards innovation is a critical and necessary step.

In order to achieve VR program success in times of constant change, leaders must create a culture of adhocracy that supports a learning organization. The decisions that these leaders make, who these leaders are, and their perceptions of the resources needed to support informed decisions will be the topic of this study. McFarlane et al. suggest that the leadership question of our time is about how state-federal VR directors lead during "times of substantive changes with enormously challenging fiscal realities?" (McFarlane et al., 2011, p. 5). The findings from the study may assist stakeholders in the field of rehabilitation in developing the programs and

resources necessary to support state-federal VR directors in enhancing their organizations'

ability to transform their agencies into high performers that can thrive in a climate of change.

Summary

The state-federal VR program originated through federal legislation. Over the years,

amendments to the Rehabilitation Act encouraged research and training of rehabilitation

counselors in an effort to assure that consistent, quality services were provided to eligible

individual with disabilities. In the 21st century, many rehabilitation agencies have experienced

downward trends across federal indicators that assess VR program success. In 2014, the latest

amendments to the Rehabilitation Act resulted in the act being included as Title IV of the WIOA.

Appropriations for the funding of state-federal rehabilitation programs under WIOA will be

level-funded for each of the next five years. In addition, training dollars are now part of the

program's general fund. While costs have increased, many agencies are not bringing in all of

their allotted federal dollars because matching state dollars have decreased. While diminishing

program dollars have directly impacted VR agencies, expectations for accountability have

increased. Today, state-federal VR directors must find creative ways to fund their programs and

inspire their staff. These individuals can help their organizations adapt to change in order to

survive and thrive. The culture created by the state-federal VR director guides the behavior of

the organization. Creation of organizational cultures, such as a culture of adhocracy, is one of

the management tools available to shape employee performance (Lincoln, 2010; Giberson et al.,

2009). The decisions that these leaders make, who these leaders are, and their perceptions of the

challenges and needs they are confronting may provide a window into the VR program of the

future.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth examination of the findings of a case study of 12 state-federal VR directors, selected from the higher-performing agencies in the continental United States. Agencies selected are those that scored at least one six and no less than a five out of six of the federal performance indicators, using the Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) 911 federal indicator data from fiscal 7ears 2011, 2012 and 2013. These agencies were selected due to their high performance on the RSA federal indicators. High-performing agencies most often exhibit a culture of adhocracy, where the organization is externally focused and emphasizes flexibility, adaptability and change. As a result, leaders in adhocracy cultures generally value innovation and building partnerships with external partners (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Sherman et al., 2014, p.118). By examining the responses of directors of higher-performing agencies, the findings of this research may be of assistance to the field of rehabilitation and VR stakeholders in understanding the cultures created by these leaders and resources these state-federal VR directors believe are necessary to support their agencies to be successful. The research, using qualitative case study methodology, will examine the following question: How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program, and what resources do they believe they need to create or enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field? As McFarlane et al. (2011) noted, the state-federal VR programs of the future will not be successful if the program leaders continue to rely solely on past experience and expertise to guide the future. Understanding how state-federal VR directors view the future and the resources they need has the potential to shape the VR program of the future. Utilizing this understanding, rehabilitation educators and other stakeholders may be able

to develop the tools and resources necessary to assist state-federal VR directors in addressing what they believe is needed to increase employment outcomes and sustain and enhance their organizations.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design that allowed the researcher to be highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants and develop a level of detail about an individual or place. Patton (2002) believed if not much is known and the study is exploratory in nature that qualitative research is useful when examining the topic. "Qualitative research methods are used less frequently in rehabilitation counseling research but this methodology can be instrumental in understanding complex interactions between individuals and their environment and how these phenomena influence environment" (Anderson, Leahy, Del Valle, Sherman & Tansey, 2014, p. 88). Qualitative approaches traditionally have included narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic studies and case studies.

This study used a case study approach that can be "defined as descriptive, exploratory or explanatory analysis of a person, group, event, policy, project, decision or institutions" (Anderson et al., 2014, p. 89). "Qualitative data is emergent, rather than preconfigured" so that the data may emerge through the interviews with the participants (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). The examination of phenomena in a natural setting instead of an experimental or controlled setting is the goal of qualitative research. Using a case study design enabled the researcher to "illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (Yin, 2009, p. 17). As Creswell (2009) has noted, case studies explore a bounded system through in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information that report a description of themes (Anderson et al., 2014). Case study design enables replication in order to

independently confirm emerging constructs and identify complementary aspects, which are analyzed within and across settings (Anderson et al., 2014). This type of study can be beneficial in understanding the issue being studied.

Based on the RSA data in Appendix I, 13 state-federal VR directors of general or combined higher-performing agencies from around the country have been identified. Of those 13 identified state-federal directors, 12 of the 13 state-federal directors agreed to participate in the study, returning their signed informed consent document. The response rate was 92.3%. All 12 of the state-federal VR directors participated in a Zoom interview, in which the interviews were audio recorded, video recorded or both. The interviews utilized a structured interview guide to solicit information from the participants.

Procedures

This study utilized a qualitative case study design with 12 of the identified 13 state-federal VR agency directors serving as the individual case sites. These cases were selected intentionally rather than randomly to examine the particular research question comprehensively and in greater depth. The state-federal VR agency directors, from both urban and rural states in the continental United States, were selected to participate. VR agency directors were chosen from agencies based on that agency's RSA 911 federal indicator data for FY 2011, FY 2012 and FY 2013. The selected state-federal agency directors' agencies must have passed the RSA federal indicator data by passing with at least one six and no less than five of six federal performance indicators used to measure agency performance over fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013, indicating higher performance levels of these agencies over a three-year period of time (Appendix I). Consistent with the protocol recommended by Yin (2009), the same

methodological framework was used across the cases in order to enhance representativeness and robustness when consistent findings emerge across sites.

After IRB approval of this exempt study was approved (Appendix A), to begin the qualitative research process, the researcher contacted both the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) for their approval, and the identified state-federal VR directors across the country for buy-in and to obtain their informed consent to be involved in this study. The researcher arranged for a time to speak with each of the 12 selected state-federal directors who agreed to take part in the study. The structured interview questions were sent out to participants approximately five days prior to the telephone interviews. Each interview was recorded using the Zoom platform to capture audio, video or both. Not all of the state-federal directors had access to the video-recording features in Zoom and for that reason only the audio portion of those recordings were utilized so that consistency was obtained in the data. Upon completion of the interviews, the MP4 audio recording was sent to a third party for transcription. Transcripts were then uploaded in Dedoose, a qualitative cloud-based software package used to code and analyze the content of the data collected. The qualitative content analysis of the data collected included: (1) identifying the research questions, (2) determining the analytic categories, (3) using the data collected to establish categories, (4) determining objective criteria for the categories, (5) sorting the data into the various categories, and (6) considering the patterns that might offer an explanation for the findings.
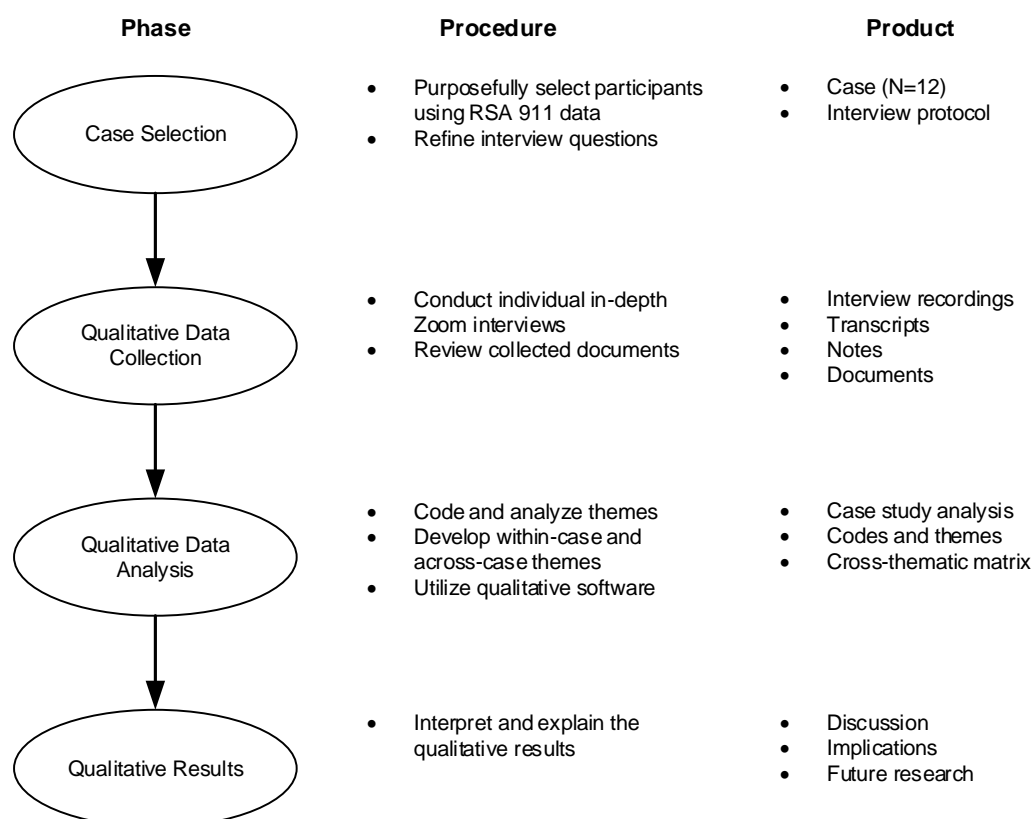
Phase	Procedure	Product
Case Selection	• Purposefully select participants using RSA 911 data • Refine interview questions	• Case (N=12) • Interview protocol
Qualitative Data Collection	• Conduct individual in-depth Zoom interviews • Review collected documents	• Interview recordings • Transcripts • Notes • Documents
Qualitative Data Analysis	• Code and analyze themes • Develop within-case and across-case themes • Utilize qualitative software	• Case study analysis • Codes and themes • Cross-thematic matrix
Qualitative Results	• Interpret and explain the qualitative results	• Discussion • Implications • Future research

Figure 5. Visual Model for Qualitative Research Design

Instrumentation

A multiple case study design (Yin, 2009) was used for selecting and analyzing the

qualitative data. Based on RSA 911 federal indicator data, 13 state-federal VR directors around

the country from higher-performing agencies were selected to participate in a Zoom interview.

The researcher requested that the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

(CSAVR) support the research study, which CSAVR agreed to do (Appendix B), by sending out

an email introducing the study to the 13 selected agency directors (Appendix C). Once the

CSAVR email was sent out to the identified state-federal VR directors, the researcher sent each

director an introductory email (Appendix D) inviting them to participate in the study by returning

the attached informed consent form (Appendix E). A second email was sent out two weeks later

to those who had not yet sent in the informed consent.

Of the 13 selected directors, 12 agreed to participate in the study by returning their signed informed consent document. The response rate for the study was 92.3%. The interviews utilized a structured interview guide to solicit information from the participants. The interviews were recorded via audio, video or both, once permission to record was obtained, and transcribed verbatim (Creswell, 2009). Steps in the qualitative analysis included: (1) Preliminary exploration of the data through use of audio-recorded interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide and notes; (2) Once the interviews were recorded, the MP4 audio file was sent to a third party for transcription; (3) Once the transcript was received, it was sent to each state director for verification of accuracy of the interview; nine of the state directors verified the accuracy of the transcript, while three did not respond, of which two had retired since the interviews took place; (4) Transcripts were imported into Dedoose, a cloud-based qualitative software package, and coded; (5) Transcripts were sent to two outside coders for verification of the data codes through inter-coder agreement check; (6) Themes were developed by aggregating similar codes using connecting and interrelating themes; and (7) A case study narrative was constructed composed of cross-case thematic analysis (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011).

The credibility of the findings was enhanced by member checking, inter-coder agreement, and use of an auditor (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2009). An external auditor, who is a Ph.D.-level educator/researcher, was selected to review the entire project to provide an assessment of its accuracy and to ask clarifying questions throughout the study process (Creswell, 2009).

The data was coded and themes developed with the assistance of two Ph.D.-level educators/researchers doing independent coding of the transcripts. The accuracy of the data was accomplished through member-checking, where participants confirmed accuracy by reviewing

their own transcript and commenting on themes and the report findings. Inter-rater reliability was addressed by asking three independent raters to review the researcher's coding at various points in the coding process. Rater #1 and Rater #2 reviewed each transcript before it was coded to minimize confirmation bias, and then reviewed the coded transcript. Once the transcripts were coded, the external auditor on the project reviewed the coded transcripts. The researcher reviewed the comments of each rater and the external auditor as they were provided, and made adjustments in the coding based on the reviewers' comments as needed.

The semi-structured interview guide (Appendix F) consisted of a demographic section and seven questions, with sub-questions to be asked of each selected state-federal VR director. The structured interview guide addressed the research question of "How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program and what resources do they believe they need to create or enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?"

Participants

Once the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study as exempt, the Council of State Agencies of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) was contacted to provide the researcher with approval for the study. CSAVR sent each of the identified participants an email supporting the study and encouraging each state-federal VR director to participate. The 13 selected state-federal VR agency directors, from across the continental United States, were then contacted for participation in the study. Selection of the participants was based on the 2011, 2012 and 2013 RSA federal indicators of state-federal VR agencies, who over that three-year time period scored at least one six and no less than a five of the six required federal indicators, as outlined in Table 1. Achieving at least one six and no less than a five for passing scores out of six of the federal

indicators over the three year-time period indicates the higher performance of that state-federal

VR agency. These agency directors were selected due to their agencies' high performance on the

RSA federal indicators. High-performing agencies most often exhibit a culture of adhocracy,

where the organization is externally focused and emphasizes flexibility, adaptability and change.

As a result, leaders in adhocracy cultures value innovation and building partnerships with

external partners (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Sherman et al., 2014, p.118). The leadership of an

organization, through strategic and operational decisions, particularly at the chief executive or

director level, forms the basis of shared values and assumptions that forms the organization's

culture (Giberson et al., 2009). Of the 13 state-federal directors contacted, 12 agreed to

participate by sending back to the researcher their signed informed consent document. Once the

informed consent was received by the researcher, interview dates and times were set up.

Approximately five days prior to the interview, each state-federal director was sent the questions

on the semi-structured guide and an invitation to the Zoom interview session (Appendix G) so

they could access the program by logging in on a computer with a microphone and camera

(video/audio recording) or dialing in (audio recording) on their telephone. Each interview lasted

between 60 to 75 minutes in length.

Table 1.

Higher-Performing State-Federal VR Agencies by Federal Fiscal Year

State	2011	2012	2013
Alaska	6	6	5
Iowa	5	6	6
Kentucky	6	5	6
Mississippi	6	6	6
Nebraska	6	6	6
New Hampshire	6	5	6
Oklahoma	6	5	5
Oregon	6	6	6
South Dakota	6	6	6

Table 1. (cont'd)			
Utah	6	5	6
West Virginia	6	5	5
Wisconsin	6	5	6
Wyoming	6	6	5

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher that is the instrument and the credibility of the research depends on the researcher's skill set, knowledge, competence and life circumstances (Patton, 2002). Researchers using this type of methodology need to be both researcher and learner to be effective (Glesne, 2011). All researchers are susceptible to bias. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, by a third party, to facilitate accuracy of the data. To check for accuracy and increase reliability of the data collected, a Ph.D.-level educator/researcher was utilized as an auditor to review the various stages of the study.

Limitations of Study

This study sought to understand the challenges and needs of the state-federal VR program from the director's perspective and to determine how these directors see the future of the public VR program. There are several limitations to be noted. First, this study looked at the perspectives of 12 out of 49 (includes the District of Columbia) state-federal VR directors of general and combined agencies located in the continental United States. The study only included higher-performing general and combined agencies based on published data from the FY 2011, 2012 and 2013 RSA federal indicators. Therefore, caution should be used in making interpretations or generalizations beyond those agencies.

Qualitative research, in general, is subject to personal biases and this study is no exception. The researcher conducting the study worked for over 28 years in the state-federal VR program and was in management at a state-federal VR agency for 20 of those years. The

researcher discussed personal biases regularly with her advisor and mentor to assist with

recognition of her biases. Additionally, two Ph.D.-level educators/researchers were enlisted to

help with independent coding of the data collected, as well as theme development, and a Ph.D.-

level educator/researcher audited the study process.

Chapter 4

Results

Participant Demographics

Twelve directors, out of 13, agreed to participate in the study. The response rate was 92.3%. The participants interviewed consisted of nine men and three women. These state-federal VR directors were from across the continental United States and were leading either combined or general VR agencies. The directors had varying lengths of time as their agency head. Of the 12 directors, one has since retired. Another director was serving in an acting capacity and has been replaced since the interview took place. Three of the directors interviewed have been in place less than a year.

Titles of state-federal directors

The 12 state-federal VR agency leaders held a number of job titles, the most prevalent being Director, with five holding that title. Three were called Administrators and three held the title of Executive Director. In addition to the title of Director, one also held the co-title of VR Field Services Administrator. At the time of the interview, one state-federal VR leader was an Acting Director and has since left the position. One of the Executive Directors has also retired since the interview took place.

Type of state-federal VR agency

The 12 state-federal VR leaders interviewed were made up of seven from combined agencies that serve both general and blind clients and five from general agencies that serve all disabilities, except for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Table 2.

States by Program Type

Combined (7)	General (5)
Alaska	Iowa
Mississippi	Kentucky
New Hampshire	Nebraska
Oklahoma	Oregon
West Virginia	South Dakota
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	

Years in current position

The state-federal VR directors interviewed had varying lengths of time on the job. The newest director had been there for only three months, while the most senior director had been in his position for 18 years.
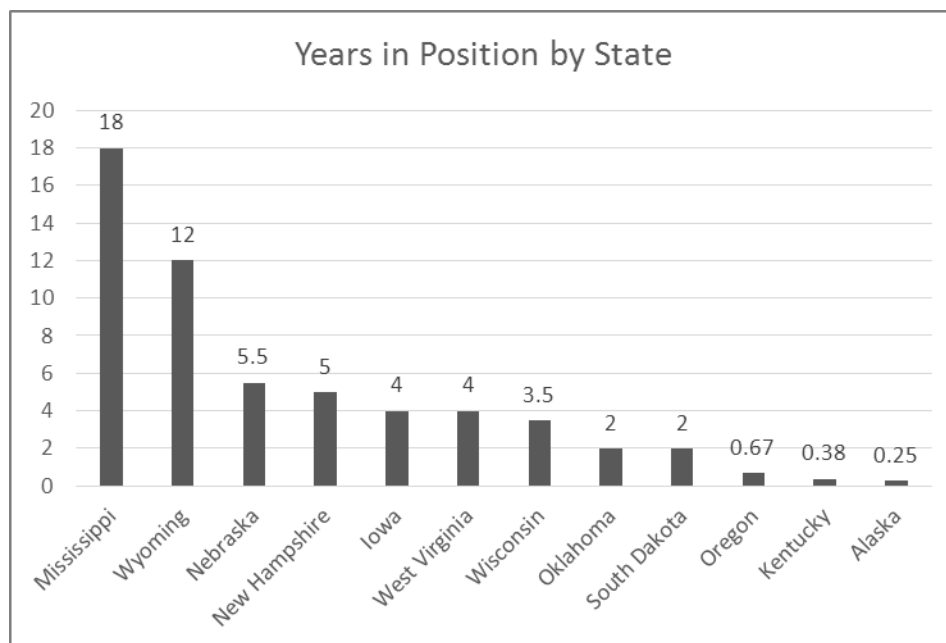
Figure 6. Years in Position by State

Previous position titles

The previous positions of the state-federal VR directors included two who had previously served as Deputy Director of the VR agency. Other job titles for previously held positions

included being an Administrator of another agency, an Administrative Operations Manager, Assistant Bureau Chief, Assistant Director of Field Services, Bureau Director for Field Services, Executive Director of another agency, Modernization Director in the DSA, VR Supervisor in the central office, and an Administrative Services Director.

State departmental locations

Names of the various Designated State Agencies (DSA), where the agency is housed, varied. Three were located in the Department of Education. Two agencies were each located in the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services. The other state-federal VR agencies were located in the Cabinet of Education and Workforce, Secretary of Education and Arts, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.
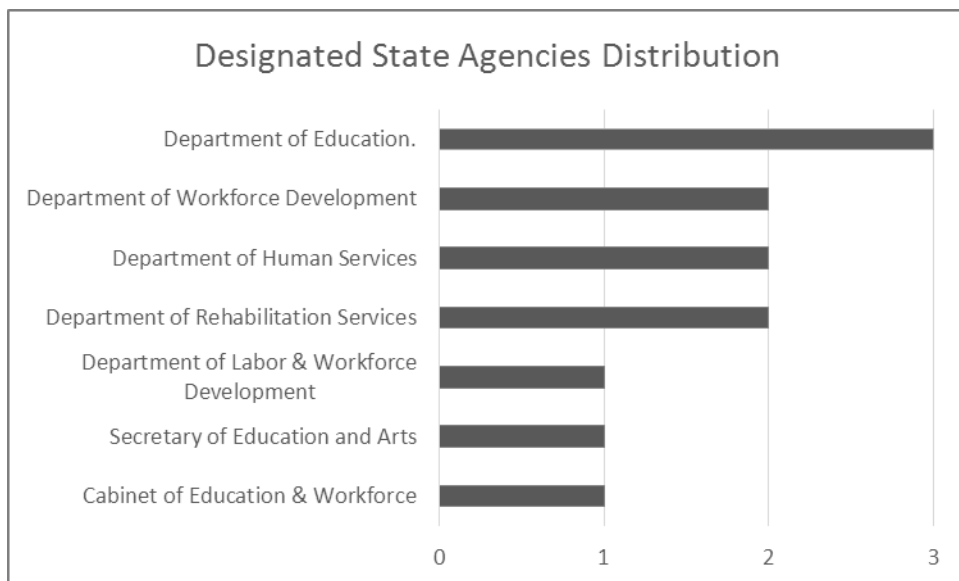
Figure 7. Designated State Agencies Distribution

Designated state unit locations

State-federal VR agencies went by a number of names, including six agencies that were called the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Three state-federal VR agencies' Designated

State Units (DSU) were called Vocational Rehabilitation Services, two were named Department of Rehabilitation Services, and one was called the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Years with current VR agency

Years with the current agency varied in length of time. The ranges included one director that had been there for four and a half months to another director that had been with the agency for 43 years. The breakdown for lengths of time with the agencies is in Figure 8.
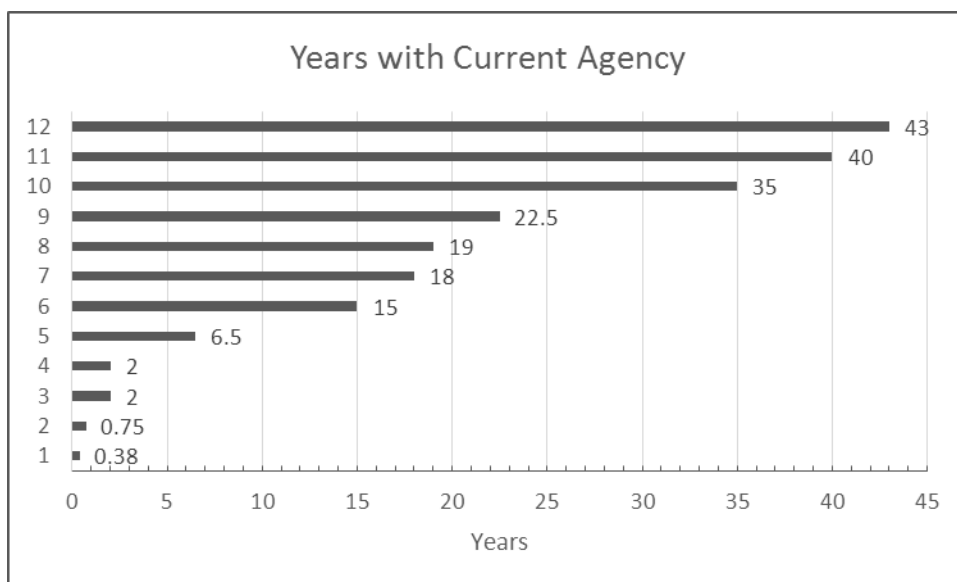
Figure 8. Years with Current Agency

Years in public rehabilitation

The years in public rehabilitation, with the current agency or another rehabilitation organization, showed one director who had been in public rehabilitation for a total of four and a half months, the shortest length of time, all the way to another director who had been working in rehabilitation for 43 years, the longest length of time. The breakdown of years in public rehabilitation is located in Figure 9.

46
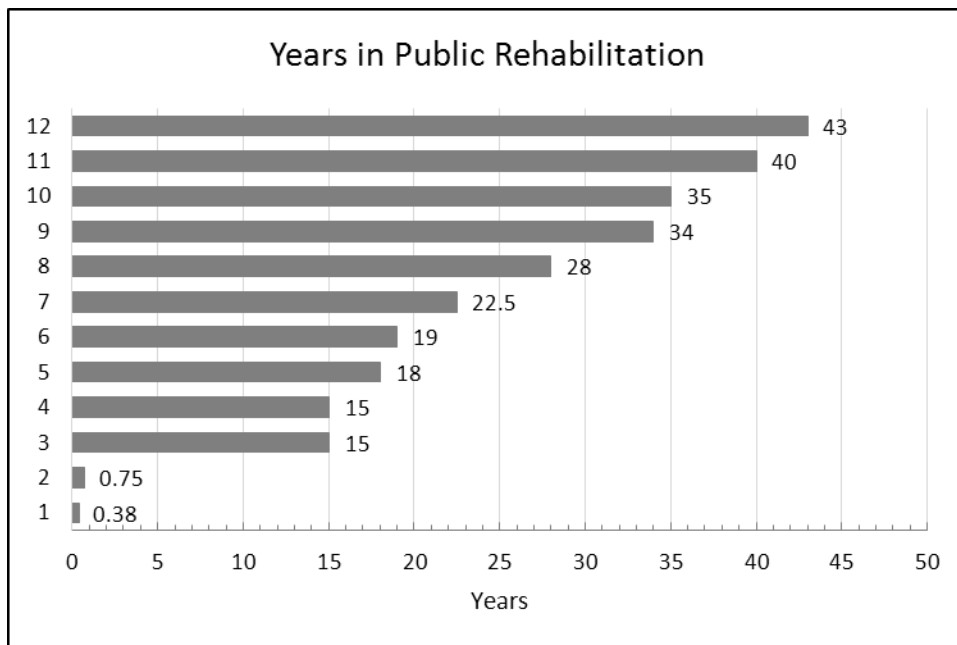
Figure 9. Years in Public Rehabilitation

Educational backgrounds and degrees

The educational background of the 12 directors showed that eight of the directors had master's degrees and four of the directors had bachelor's degrees. The master's degree breakdown showed that two directors each had master's degrees in Education and two in Rehabilitation Counseling. Other master's degrees were in Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology, and Personnel Services. The four directors with bachelor's degrees were degrees in Accounting, Finance and Accounting, Sociology, and Business.

Licenses or certification held

Five of the state-federal VR directors held no licenses or certifications. Of those directors that did hold licenses or certifications, four were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC). Of the remaining directors, one each held a Microsoft Certification, one was a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), and one was a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

Themes and Categories

After each director's informed consent was received by the researcher, the 12 interview dates and times were set up. Approximately five days prior to the interview, each state-federal director was sent the questions on the semi-structured guide and an invitation to the Zoom interview session so they could access the program by logging in on a computer with a microphone and camera (video/audio recording) or dialing in (audio recording) on their telephone. Each interview lasted between 60 to 75 minutes in length. The interviews, once recorded, were sent to a third party for transcription services.

Once the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were loaded into Dedoose, a cloud-based qualitative software package. The transcripts were coded inside of Dedoose by the researcher. Two Ph.D.-level educators/researchers each went into Dedoose and coded the transcripts separately to ensure inter-rater reliability. Themes were then identified that emerged from the data. A Ph.D. researcher was utilized as an auditor on the study and she reviewed the entire project after coding by all parties was completed. The results of the findings and the themes on the future of the state-federal VR program are discussed below.

Future of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Perspectives of the VR program in the next decade

State-federal VR directors see increased collaboration with partners outside the agency, especially workforce partners and school systems. One state-federal VR director offered this view: "It's about how we connect with our business partners and our community providers so it is about building relationships." The future will require stronger cross-agency partnerships leading to better outcomes for people with disabilities. Statements such as VR will be "a much better place for people with disabilities because they will earn higher wages, they will be more

integrated into society and it'll be a much better place" showed a positive outlook for public VR programs. Respondents note that shifting demographics will drive the changes, an overarching theme surrounding the current challenges with WIOA and the dramatic changes required. "Taking advantage of technologies" will be a key to the VR program's future and having "stronger connections to the business community" will enable the VR program to "train people into jobs." State-federal VR directors believe the combined state plan will become the norm for VR agencies and workforce partners.

In the future, one state-federal VR director believes "people with disabilities will have more control" over the process. The VR program will need to "refocus on various disabilities" and increasingly work will be done at the "local level." Budget constraints will be a consideration. While one director believes we are in the most "transformative stage with the WIOA that we have seen in 40 years," another director saw "no major changes."

Creating VR's future

A strong theme of collaboration among state agencies, school systems and employment organizations was noted by the directors. Agency directors view the "combined state plan" as being the impetus for moving forward with the theme of collaboration. Two directors discussed the need to "change the internal culture of VR" and two other directors discussed the need to "train staff on the changes." As another director put it, there must be "shared commitment and ownership on all our program goals." "Technology implications" were mentioned by two directors for "both employment opportunities and for people with disabilities," as well as "updating business practices." Two other directors stated that outcomes/numbers might go down as the agencies focus on specific disability mandates. Two directors thought that staff may be doing less counseling and less physical restorations. One director stated that staff members need

to "work differently and work smarter," while another director offered that VR programs need to begin "focusing on an empowering, effective and efficient customer service experience."

The directors consistently stated that the future will bring Workforce partners together to work more closely, including in physical locations, and there will be a need to "focus on defining roles of all partners" and utilization of shared resources. While one director anticipates that "quality will go up," two other directors expressed concerns that "funding could be cut if numbers decrease," especially with the increased focus on schools and youth.

State director concerns about the future

Two state-federal VR directors were concerned about the need to reserve 15% of the budget for transition and pre-employment training services (PETS). One director summed up the concern with the following statement: "My concern over really the expansion of the transitioning youth services in VR is a real challenge for VR, not so much for us. We've been working with transitioning youth for a long time. About 30% of our caseload and funding has been spent on transitioning youth. I think where I'm concerned is, you know, now we've got to provide these generalized PET services, pre-employment transition services, and there's no additional funding. There's no additional clarification on the difference between, or, you know, what is special ed's responsibility, what's VR's responsibility? You know, we've got these concerns around the 15%, we don't know how to track it. Of course, we don't have finalized regulations at the current time, so we're, we're kind of flying the plane with some of our instruments working and some of them aren't." Another director put it this way: "If I had a concern, it would be within WIOA right now and it's most specifically the pre-employment transition services requirement of reserving 15% of our total budget." "Being stretched to capacity" and "getting people to work together to remove barriers" was mentioned by more than one director. Concerns included

"getting one-stops to serve people with disabilities that don't need specialized services" rather than sending everyone who mentions a disability down the hall to the VR program. Another director was concerned about "not losing customers due to WIOA changes." How common performance measures will be handled was another concern, along with the unfunded requirements of WIOA. Providing "culture change" training to staff, along with disability training to Workforce partners, was thought to be necessary by two of the directors.

Funding concerns mentioned by the directors, including "blended and braided services," "third-party contracts for funding," "maintenance of effort" (MOE) and "match requirement" concerns. One director surprisingly had no concerns about the future.

Rehabilitation Legislation

Improving the service delivery system for PWD in light of WIOA

In order to improve the service delivery system to meet the needs of people with disabilities, most state-federal VR directors consider it important to "partner to increase efficiencies" and have earlier involvement with school systems. To do this, there should be an effort to focus outward, not inward on the agency. One director put it this way: "We have to look outward, we have to really kind of practice what we preach in that we have to look at how we can deliver services that do impact individuals with disabilities rather than being as worried about the Division of Rehabilitation Services being an entity in and of itself." Another director said that they would like to develop a "talent acquisition portal for employers."

A director mentioned that "we would like to see a common intake established out here so that if a person walks in, mental health or Department of Family Services or whatever, they would complete an intake form, and if they were in the wrong spot, they could just walk over to VR and we would have that information available and be able to identify him or her early on."

Five of the directors mentioned that the dual customer approach will improve the system, as will working with advocacy groups and having closer ties with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). In addition, there needs to be a "firm understanding of what state-federal VR agencies are responsible for" so that VR agencies can "stay relevant." One director specifically mentioned that it would be helpful for RSA to provide more guidance in order for agencies to better focus on quality outcomes.

Changes from WIOA affecting state-federal VR agencies

The state-federal VR directors discussed how WIOA would affect their organizations and offered some specific examples. Closer connections to business was mentioned, reallocation of resources to PET, and common performance measures were thought to be some of the effects of WIOA implementation. One director commented: "Businesses are driving the conversation right now." Another agency director has a "goal of no stand-alone offices" outside of Workforce one-stops. The need for additional business account managers or consultants was seen as necessary to support the system under WIOA by two of the directors.

Partnerships under WIOA were seen as affecting the organizations in terms of a "battle for recognition of VR among WIOA partners" and the pressure of "being included in planning" by Workforce partners. One director mentioned that there will be a need to "integrate space and equipment" within the Workforce environment.

Concerns ranged from administrative burdens to changes in providing PETS, perhaps "being forced into an order of selection" due to trying to do more with the same or fewer resources. There were thought to be additional pressures on partnerships, and perhaps that waiting lists might be necessary, as the agencies try to focus on the transition mandates. Geographic challenges remain a concern with limited staff, because it is hard to get full-time

equivalent (FTEs) positions. Increased use of technology was thought to be necessary to be able to serve customers. As one director put it, "we haven't been able to get permanent FTEs."

Agency Actions

Maintaining the values of the rehabilitation process

Agency directors offered thoughts on ways their programs can maintain the values of the rehabilitation process while working in the larger context of collaboration and partnership as part of the integrated Workforce system. As one director put it, we must "keep ourselves focused on those that we serve and keep that as our front focal point, we will maintain the mission of this agency." Maintaining agency focus and funding in order to create value for customers were mentioned as ways to help maintain the values of the rehabilitation process. Providing services that are individualized is seen as a strength of the VR programs. Three directors mentioned the need to provide statewide in-service training about the VR program to all professional partners and that it will be necessary to do this to assure partner understanding of the VR program. Three directors also mentioned that being the experts on disability, assistive technology (AT), and competitive integrated employment should assist VR with the challenge of not being absorbed into the larger Workforce system.

Actions by state-federal VR director and resources needed

Additional funding, along with the ability to increase administrative staff, would help most VR agencies, since administrative positions have been cut as dollars have tightened. Actions state-federal VR directors have taken to strive to make their agencies' performance what they believe it should be include discussing maintenance of effort (MOE) with legislators, training staff on the WIOA regulations, changing business processes to meet the WIOA regulations, and educating Workforce partners. Other directors have used "coaching as a

leadership skill" for encouraging change with staff, developing "up-to-date case management systems," establishing "leadership councils," and going on "listening tours" to assist in making the program what they believe it should be. One director has increased initiatives such as "Work First" in striving to meet standards and indicators. Better use of customer surveys was mentioned by one director as a way to hear customer input.

Investments in training, such as sending staff to the Interwork leadership training that is put on by San Diego State, as well as designing and implementing field-based quality assurance (QA) teams, are other ways directors see themselves supporting their agencies. A state-federal VR director discussed the need to "really have good metrics, good data, behind you so you can see if your changes and your actions have resulted in the outcomes that you're expecting and if not, then being able to pivot and have some other options, so having that quarterly business review, which we do for our entire department, for Department of Human Services, but also in our program as well, and then having the same type of methodology which is, it's a management system basically at the local level and the district level as well. And so, by having that line of sight so every counselor and every Human Services assistant can see how their work impacts the larger goals of the program." Interestingly, one director offered that he "does not need more money" while most of the other directors felt they "could use more money."

Resources needed to maintain and increase levels of success

In order to maintain the levels of success directors are experiencing today and to bring those levels up to a higher degree of success, three state-federal VR directors felt they need to maintain or increase their FTEs, and where they are not permanent, make their Business Consultant positions permanent. Some directors mentioned that they could use more transition staff, others more administrative staff. One director offered: "This program has kind of been

gutted, to be honest with you, at least administratively. And so we're trying to rebuild that and trying to make our structure, and it's one of the things that I will be doing right away hopefully is free some efficiencies into our structure as much as possible." Another director mentioned they need more staff with rehabilitation backgrounds to replace the retiring baby boomers.

It was noted that more frequent discussions with Workforce partners and better utilization of collective (i.e., partner) resources could be of assistance to VR agencies. One director mentioned the need for more community resources, such as rehabilitation centers, especially in the more rural areas. One state-federal VR director talked about the need to "move from a caseload to a workload model."

Overall, seven state-federal VR agencies were maximizing all their state funds and five had obtained re-allotment funds, which are funds other agencies are not able to access that become available for other state-federal VR agencies to bring into their budgets if they have enough state match dollars. Six of the state-federal VR directors mentioned the need to increase federal funding levels, especially to bring on more staff.

Societal Advancements for People with Disabilities

Positioning the agency to create a better world for people with disabilities

Outreach and working with advocacy groups was noted by five directors as a key to positioning the agency to influence and create a better world for people with disabilities, instead of just reacting to outside forces. One director offered: "We put a lot of stock in our state rehabilitation council. We also put a lot of stock in consumer surveys. But we have a third entity that we have developed in our agency and it's called the consumer advisory committees. Those are local groups from local cities." Another director mentioned that they "market our program in that it is that we're a resource for our customers." There was a consistent theme of

collaboration and education to include governors and state legislators as directors sees to spread the word about what VR does. Directors also meet with other agency directors, as one state-federal director mentioned, "at the state level, I try to meet with those individuals from other programs, you know, to kind of set the stage." By educating others, including putting out success stories, state-federal VR directors sought to be proactive in creating change for people with disabilities. One VR director addressed the National Governors Association, while others were involved with CSAVR initiatives. Some of the directors were interested in technology and discussed the need for better client information systems, while another director offered that they are "pro-active on social media."

Using the director position to create a better world for people with disabilities

The top thing that state-federal VR directors believe they need to do in using their position to create a better world for people with disabilities is to share success stories with their state's legislators. One director shared an example of what he does by saying "the lieutenant governor drinks the Kool-Aid of the program and we do that with the stories. We are sending up the phenomenal stories of how lives are transformed, individuals that were on SSI, SSDI, or had no hope and then they connect with DVR and they have a future, they have jobs." Other directors mentioned attending conferences and sharing information; having high expectations of their staff, being in leadership positions with organizations such as CSAVR, being fiscally responsible, creating in-house training such as "new VR counselor training," expanding programs by doing things such as creating additional Project Search sites, and developing grant opportunities with partners. Being transparent and doing no harm was the motto of one director who mentioned that "my personal mission is to do no harm and to really make sure that we are staying true to our mission but also doing, you know, we have some very specific core values

56

that we live by and to make sure that, you know, we're doing right by, you know, being as transparent as possible, honoring, respecting, being responsible, being fiscally responsible and doing the right thing and, but recognizing we're going to make mistakes but we've got to make sure that our decisions are not harming other individuals." State-federal VR directors were using their positions to develop memorandums of understanding (MOU) for fund-sharing with programs such the Veterans Administration (VA). Directors were attending meetings with partners, meetings about the unified state plan, pulling Workforce partners together to help them understand partner programs, serving on committees throughout the state, modeling what is expected of staff, and being a strong advocate. As one director stated about using their position: "State directors are time-limited and have to make choices" about how they use their position to create that better world for people with disabilities.

State Director Activities

Resources needed to be a successful state director

A recurring theme has been the loss of the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers (TACE). Directors mourn the loss of the TACE centers and would like help with additional technical assistance. One director summed it up this way: "Really appreciated the fact that we had [a regional TACE], when we had our regional partners I could call up and we'd have somebody in the [TACE] office if we needed to [talk through an issue], and I don't see that anymore." One director would like to see faster, more accurate responses from RSA. Some of the directors would like to see regional forums developed where they can talk with other state-federal VR directors in their regions. The ability to attend trainings and conferences was seen as a plus. Support internally was seen as critical in many ways, including for the ability to increase match to bring down federal funds.

Directors mentioned training in a number of ways. One director talked about needing new models that connect the agency with the outside world and inside the agency; another mentioned the leadership program at Interwork from San Diego State University and CSAVR's New Director training. A quote from one director mentioned that he could use "anything that connects me to what's going on in the outside world, and within VR, but also, I really, I like looking and scanning for models that transfer over to VR services, that kind of out-of-the-box thinking. So I like to challenge myself, as well as staff with that kind of thinking. So resources are what help me access that information." Resources for training all staff were mentioned as a need. Other directors discussed needing to obtain mentors, surrounding themselves with others in the field who know more than they do, protecting the resources they have and acquiring more money for training. One director said he has all the resources and training he needed.

Activities for agency success

Training, in order for the agency to be successful, was mentioned by a number of the directors. One director put it this way: "I think that is critical that people partake in that." Development of a pre-employment training program for customers was thought to be helpful in carrying out agency activities by another director. Other directors mentioned collaborating with disability groups, and one director reported having access to the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) and their Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC), which resides in their region. With the closing of the TACE centers, that state-federal VR director was grateful that one of the new centers was close enough for them to utilize. Collaborating with other state directors was seen as helpful. Assuring consistent statewide policy interpretation, understanding partner roles and services, consistently educating legislators for help with additional match, and promoting the advancement of people with disabilities has

helped with agency success. One director offered on this topic: "Resources are not diminishing, they've just never been here. So what we're doing is, you know, developing our own relationships with those folks that are here."

State-federal VR director training and learning communities

Learning from other state-federal VR directors was seen as a necessary form of training. One of the newer directors offered, "I've had a lot of individualized one-on-one training and have created kind of my own little cohort of other state directors that I reach out to on a pretty consistent basis." Five out of the 12 directors have attended the CSAVR New Directors training, three attended training put on by their TACE center in the past, and three have attended leadership training put on by Interwork in San Diego. Directors were highly complimentary of both the CSAVR New Directors training and the leadership training put on by Interwork. A few of the directors obtain information from experienced staff. There was concern that there is no one place to go for training anymore, referring to the closing of the TACE centers. Another director has gone through their state's leadership training and one director offered that they had received no training.

Decision-making over personnel and finances

Eleven of the 12 state-federal VR directors believe they have decision-making authority over personnel and budget. One state-federal VR director believed they have influence, but not direct authority over personnel and budget matters.

Agency Policies

Upholding the letter and the spirit of the law

The majority, nine out of 12, of directors believe their agency's policy is designed to meet both the law and regulations and also benefit the person receiving the services. In terms of policy,

one state director summed it up by saying, "we're also trying to make it incredibly congruent and making sure that we have our consumers in mind along with what we're trying to accomplish. So to answer your question, yes, we are definitely, I mean, that's why we're here, is to serve individuals with disabilities so we have to ensure that we don't restrict our policy to the place where that's prohibitive." Two of the directors thought their policies are written to support the regulations and one director offered that their policy "is a work in progress." Some other comments by directors included developing policies that "meet you (i.e., customers) where you are," one offered that policy was "consumer-driven," and one said that there is a financial needs test as part of their policy. One agency director mentioned developing policy around braided funding with behavioral health. Another director mentioned he writes all the policy for the agency and bases it on the federal law. The 15% set-aside for transition services was seen as a policy concern by four of the 12 directors interviewed.

Factors related to development of financial policies

Stakeholder involvement in policy decisions was mentioned by two directors. Two of the directors shared that they developed their policies in-house. Directors were trying to be creative and one noted that they had developed "a code to pay for discovery." While one director writes the policy for his agency, other directors offered that they develop policy by bringing together committees of various staff.

Efforts around localizing decision-making

In the majority of agencies, eight out of 12, VR counselors have the authority to determine client authorizations. Four of the agencies allow VR counselors to authorize only up to a certain amount before requiring approval from a supervisor. Three directors said that the

ability to authorize funds for client services depends on the level of the counselor. One state-federal VR director signs off on all post-secondary educational plans that are written by her staff.

One director disperses client services money regionally via quarterly allocations. Four of the agencies hold their budgets at the state level to draw from, while others provide budgets to districts or regions and some directly to the VR counselor. One state-federal VR director put it this way, "There's not an individual budget that they have to comply with. We track the budget at the state level. We have one state overall budget of case services, so each area office provides services until we cut off statewide."

Staffing and Training

Attitudes, knowledge, skills and abilities needed by staff

Seven out of 12 of the state-federal VR directors would like staff they can train into positions. Almost half, five out of 12 of the directors, require master's degrees for their VR counseling staff. Three of the other directors prefer a master's degree for their counseling staff. Four directors hire at the bachelor's level and of those that hire at that level, three require those staff to get their master's degree within a certain timeframe. As one director put it, the "senior counselor position is obtained upon successful completion of a master's degree and CRC certification." Another director mentioned that staff getting a master's degree was their goal. A different state-federal VR director mentioned a preference for the LPC for counseling staff. A director summed up her thoughts this way, "we do not have an absolute standard that they have to have a master's. However, that is preferential hiring for those that have a master's and then have the CRC. We do have some bachelor-level counselors."

Several of the directors offered thoughts on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they would like staff to have. Those include, having a positive outlook, being public service-minded,

and having good communication, as well as having good computer skills. One director

mentioned that they need staff who are willing to go above and beyond. As one director put it, "I

think in terms of counselors, I love for them to have, you know, really open minds. I love for

them to have really positive outlooks. I like them to have really good problem-solving skills. I

like them to be fairly quick thinking on their feet." Common sense was also mentioned as a

necessary attribute.

Certification of VR counselors

Half, six out of 12, of the VR agency directors said that being a Certified Rehabilitation

Counselor (CRC) was not required. Of those, two directors said they had no training dollars

available to support the staff being CRC or CRC eligible. Three directors mentioned that

counselors should be CRC, three directors said it should be a goal to strive for and two others

offered that they see the CRC as "preferred." One director thought having the CRC should be

part of a career ladder for counselors.

Support and funding for training and personnel development

Four state-federal VR directors allocate a training budget each year for staff training.

Three directors use regular 110 dollars, state-federal allotments, for training, and three other

directors said their agency invests in training for a career ladder for staff. One director offered

that they "absorb that [training] in our general fund, which is what we've been doing. We're

lucky. We have a very decent training and travel budget. We have a training staff." Not all

directors had those kinds of resources and one used cost-reimbursement dollars to fund training

at their agency. Another director admitted they need to do more planning around training issues.

Two directors offered that it is a challenge to provide support for training. One director said that

he funds motivational interviewing in this agency and another offered that the DSA invests in

leadership training for staff.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth examination of the research question, "How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?" Simon (1991) wrote that the question needing to be proposed to rehabilitation leaders is "what options are most needed and practical to insure that most or all (i.e., consumers) can perform these critical jobs when they enter them and throughout their tenure" (Simon, 1991, p.2 09). He went on to say, "The most formidable obstacle to rehabilitation efforts to fulfill its function to the fullest lies with creating capable, effective leadership" (Saleh, 1991, p. 212). Participants identified for inclusion this study came state-federal VR directors leading higher-functioning VR agencies, based on three years of RSA 911 data, from combined or general VR agencies in the continental United States. Thirteen state agencies were identified meeting the establish criteria. Of those, 12 directors agreed to participate. A semi-structured interview guide was used to guide the interviews.

Vision of the Future under WIOA

The responses to the research question in this study, "How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?" were examined to first look at the director responses and the themes coming from those responses, and then to consider the implications of the responses in light of the vision of the future that the federal funding partner, RSA, has put forth for state-federal VR agencies to meet in order to be in compliance under WIOA legislation moving into the future.

In order to continue to address the employment the outlook for people with disabilities, in 2014 Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (H.R. 803, 2014). Title IV of the WIOA legislation authorizing state-federal VR agencies is overseen by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The RSA technical assistance circular, RSA-TAC-15-01, discussed the spirit and intent of WIOA, and the characteristics required of VR agencies have been grouped into three functional categories. Those categories are (1) Customer Service, (2) Innovation and Service Design, and (3) Systems Integration and High Quality Staffing. In the interviews, the state-federal VR directors addressed their vision of the future of the VR program. The implications of the director responses were examined and those themes that were addressed by the directors during the interviews generally fell in line with the functional categories outlined by RSA. The implications of this study will be examined in light of the data collected from the state-federal VR directors that speak to the future of the VR program, including areas that were addressed that can also be found in the technical assistance circular.

RSA is encouraging states to adopt the vision outlined in the RSA-TAC-15-01 and build that vision into the "policies and procedures related to the management of the one-stop delivery system." On August 13, 2015, after the interviews for this study were completed, OSERS through RSA sent out to state-federal VR agencies Technical Assistance Circular RSA-TAC-15-01 (Appendix H) on their "Vision for the One-Stop Delivery System under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)." Separate guidance will be issued by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education to their grantees who are partners in the workforce development system. As stated in the summary section of the circular, "WIOA increases the accountability of core WIOA programs, including the VR program, to place emphasis on

promoting better alignment among Federal job training programs." This vision reinforces the findings from the state-federal VR director interviews that partnerships and strategies are necessary for one-stop centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to obtain good jobs and stay employed; and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce."

During the interviews, the state-federal VR directors were acutely aware of looking at their agencies in light of the new WIOA legislation. Their responses took into consideration the changes their agencies are undergoing to position their agencies to be responsive to the new mandates of WIOA. It was evident during the interviews that directors are immersed in finding ways to be successful and manage their staff and partnerships in light of what they are expecting is the new normal and this appeared to heavily influence the conversations. This new normal includes changing their organizational culture to move from operating as hierarchical entities that are focused on the internal organization and control (Millington & Schulz, 2009) to agencies that create learning environments that support staff in implementing best practices that lead to greater organizational success (Tuft, 2012). These state-federal VR directors are attempting to become transformational leaders who see a need for change, create a new vision and obtain a commitment from followers for organizational change (Rijal, 2010).

Customer Service

State-federal VR directors believe they serve two sets of customers, the consumer with the disability and businesses looking for trained employees. "Despite the development and enhancement of public policies promoting workforce development and employment participation over the past three decades, individuals with disabilities continue to experience disparate

66

workforce participation rates and lower earnings than their non-disabled peers" (Golden et al., 2012, p. 16). As one VR director stated, it is about "how we connect with our job candidates and how we connect with our business partners and our community providers, so it's about building relationships." In discussing customers, there was recognition that in order to meet the mandates of WIOA some agencies need to focus more on business customers to be successful in a one-stop environment. An example of recognition of that fact came from a director who stated, "we have not focused upon our other consumer, which is the employers, and so one of the things I've learned going back to CSAVR a couple of months ago and going to D.C. was that we really need to rethink that." Another director mentioned that the "emphasis in WIOA [is] on treating employers as customers as well as people with disabilities is a positive." Increased collaboration with partners and helping staff take ownership of the changes occurring through WIOA was a recurrent theme in the interviews that fall in line with the RSA guidance to "develop, offer, and deliver business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy" (RSA-TAC-15-01, 2015). Nine of the 12 directors felt a stronger connection with the business community, while maintaining a focus on people with disabilities creates a positive outlook for state-federal VR programs. In terms of customer services one director suggested that it was important to "focus on providing an empowering, effective and efficient customer service experience."

While VR agencies in the past primarily focused on the individual with the disability, all of the state-federal VR directors emphasized with new urgency on the need to work with the business customers. Agencies expressed need for increasing the number of staff who work with business. At the same time, there was also an appreciation of the counselor's role and recognition that serving clients with disabilities is the reason the agency exists and their mandate

of increasing services for transition customers. In an age of increased accountability, directors realize they must create organizational cultures that lead to learning organizations that utilize evidence-based practices in serving both types of customers (Daniels, 1997).

Innovation and Service Design

Changing the internal culture of the VR agency was thought to be necessary to create an environment open to innovation and the ability to affect effective service designs. Culture is the "medium through which leadership travels and impacts organizational performance" (Packard, 2009, p. 154). An organization's culture guides the organization's behavior (Giberson et al., 2009). In an age of accountability, state-federal VR directors must develop organizational climates that create learning organization and utilize evidence-based practices (Daniels, 1997). Schultz (2008) noted that culture was the collective practices of the organization. He stated that, "organizations thrive when the organizational culture facilitates buy-in, creativity, and personal involvement of professional staff" (p. 40). Organizational culture is one of the management tools available to leaders of organizations that can shape employee performance (Giberson et al., 2009; Lincoln, 2010; Sherman et al., 2014). "Culture can influence employee views of what is and what is not important, it allows an individual to develop knowledge that can impact organizational learning, and it creates processes by which knowledge is created, approved and distributed" (Sherman et al., 2014). Executive leadership sets the tone to create cultures that have the potential to transform agencies into learning organizations and that empower staff towards innovation. Leadership continuity will also become a highly significant factor in the sustainability of these types of enabling organizational cultures.

State-federal VR directors understand that staff roles must be clearly defined within the one-stop system and training of VR staff not only on the WIOA legislation but on workforce

partner roles will be necessary. Some VR agencies are already becoming "intermingled" in the physical space of the one-stop centers. One director had a goal of no longer having standalone VR offices. In developing the required service design, one director offered, "we endorse the sharing of resources not just in money but in people and how we work." As state-federal VR agencies become increasingly involved with one-stops within a workforce environment, transitioning state VR agencies from administrative entities (Herbert, 2004; Herbert & Trusty, 2006; Schultz, 2007; Schultz, 2008; Bezyak, Ososkie, Trice & Yeager, 2010) into learning organizations that develop and promote evidence-based service delivery practices is necessary to enhance program outcomes and create environments that facilitate innovation. Learning organizations develop new knowledge and insight from the common experiences of their employees and have the potential to promote positive behaviors and improve the organization's capabilities (Sanz-Valle, Naranjo-Valencia, Jimenez-Jimenez & Perez-Caballero, 2011).

Seven of the 12 state-federal VR directors are preparing for common indicators by working on creating computer systems that allow for common intake, with one director stating, "we would like to see a common intake established out here so that if a person walks in, mental health or Department of Family Services or whatever, they would complete an intake form, and if they were in the wrong spot, they could just walk over to VR and we would have that information available and be able to identify him or her early on." Another director said, "I really see the VR program taking advantage more of technologies." The RSA-TAC-15-01 circular mentions using an integrated and expert intake process for all customers. State-federal VR directors will need to lead their agencies to develop software solutions not just internally and among workforce partners, but also for access to services in order to create RSA's vision of service delivery that is both virtual and center-based.

Half of the directors were concerned about lack of technical assistance due to the loss of their regional TACE center, which could impact RSA's vision particularly around implementation of innovative and evidence-based delivery models. As a director said, we "appreciated the fact that we had, when we had our regional partners I could call up and we'd have somebody in office if we needed to, and I don't see that anymore." It will become increasingly important for VR agencies to create cultures of adhocracy that recognize that innovation and change are necessary in order to enable organizations to take charge of shaping their own futures (Giberson et al., 2009).

Systems Integration and High-Quality Staffing

Collaboration and partnership were consistent themes among the directors interviewed. Vision, values and creativity should be used in setting direction by leaders (Daniels, 1997). The RSA-TAC-15-01 circular also outlines a vision that reflects the establishment of partnership among partners. One director noted that his agency is "moving out of our isolated silos and really talking about how are we part of, how are we integrated into a larger system and are we creating value for that system." Another director summed it up this way, "agencies are going to have an opportunity to go where we need to go and that's provide services as early as possible for students with disabilities and become more intrinsically involved with the workforce investment system as well as the educational system." A director mentioned the need to "connect with our job candidates and how we connect with our business partners and our community providers, so it's about building relationships." State-federal VR directors are increasing their collaborations and partnerships with one-stop partners and other partners such as those in the business community, educational and mental health systems.

Four of the directors mentioned partnering to increase efficiencies. One director

discussed his goal of completely moving his offices in to the one-stops and developing

opportunities to share resources and equipment such as copiers for the office, not tied to any one

program. Four directors in this study are beginning to look at how this might work for their

agencies, especially for those staff located within one-stops. The RSA circular includes a vision

that partners in the one-stop organize and integrate services by function.

Providing training to partners was seen as critical in developing joint service strategies as

one director offered that they need to "provide them with training and understanding so they

don't automatically see someone with a disability." Two of the directors interviewed for this

study mentioned needing additional business account managers or business consultant staff and

this would tie into the RSA vision of developing business services teams. Concerns around the

one-stop partners included fears they won't serve people with disabilities not needing

individualized services.

Five of the directors are looking at ways to update their case-management systems. A

variety of systems are in use, including individually developed single-state systems. One

director is working on creating an integrated case-management system with workforce partners

that is in line with RSA's vision of developing an "integrated case-management system that

allows the sharing of customer information among the partners working with the individual

being served" (RSA-TAC-15-01). A director of one state-federal VR agency offered his vision

as it relates to integrated computer systems and common intake: "We would like to see a

common intake established out here so that if a person walks in, mental health or Department of

Family Services or whatever, they would complete an intake form, and if they were in the wrong

spot, they could just walk over to VR and we would have that information available and be able to identify him or her early on."

Given the variety of computer and case-management systems that VR agencies have, it will take a concerted effort, as well as funding, to develop updated systems that interact seamlessly with Workforce partners. Providing additional funding to make needed IT infrastructure and software upgrades is something that RSA might consider to help implement its vision. Though costs have increased, since the early 1990s state-federal rehabilitation agencies have essentially been level-funded (O'Brien & Graham, 2009). State-federal VR agencies have limited resources and the 12 agencies interviewed ranged from one director needing no additional resources to other agencies that feel stretched to capacity. There has always been "a need to balance existing need against available resources" (Shaw, 1997, p. 296).

Common performance indicators were mentioned by directors and in the RSA circular. Concerns around implementation were expressed by one director. Six of the 12 directors felt they could use more guidance from RSA around changes that need to be implemented. Specifically, one director wanted "faster and more accurate responses from RSA."

Training for VR agency staff and Workforce partners was thought to be necessary by a number of the state-federal VR directors. Assuring all one-stop center staff is cross-training is a goal in RSA's vision. Having the resources to train staff and partners is a concern. As one director put it, it is "kind of an irritant for me. The relationship we had with our TACE was really remarkable, as with the RCEPS before that, but TACE especially, a couple of the staff of the TACE were retired state administrators that I knew and they provided an awful lot of our training at the in-services, but they were just an excellent resource if we had questions or wanted to, you know, just round-table an issue. And losing the TACE was a big blow." While three of

the directors mentioned having some training staff, one director stated that he has one staff member who did training for the entire agency. In the age WIOA, training dollars used for staff development will now be part of an agency's general allotment and, of the agency's allotment, 15% is now required to be set aside for pre-employment transition services (Schroeder, 2014).

When asked how they currently fund training, one agency director said it was a work in progress, a few others plan to set money aside in their budgets, while another director uses reimbursement dollar from Social Security to fund training in his agency. The VR directors said that they are working to educate Workforce partners about VR and people with disabilities at the meetings they have been attending. Thought and planning will need to go into how trainings for VR staff and partners are funded and what resources are needed to best provide the necessary training both internally and externally. Today, state-federal VR directors must find creative ways to fund the programs and training opportunities they need and inspire their staff. Creation of a culture that promotes a learning organization is necessary to bring out the best in employees and encourages staff to enhance their skills and performance, which encourages shared knowledge and expertise to improve the organization.

Implications for State-Federal VR Directors

Collaboration and partnerships were consistent themes expressed by the directors interviewed for this study. The Technical Assistance Circular RSA-TAC-15-0, released in August 2015, provides RSA's vision for collaboration and partnership in a seamless operating one-stop center, having both in-person and virtual services for customers, which incorporates the services on all core WIOA partners. In order to meet their expectations under WIOA, most of the directors in this study have already begun meeting with partners to work out MOUs and, in some cases, the physical space requirements to co-locate. State-federal VR directors around the

country need to take on the challenges of WIOA, as they work together with partners on a combined state plan and common performance indicators. Integrated case-management systems for one-stop access will require VR agencies review their IT systems and, in many instances, fund and acquire more up-to-date systems and software.

Culture is the "medium through which leadership travels and impacts organizational performance" (Packard, 2009, p. 154). Culture is closely tied to an organization's top leadership. In order to make the changes in their agencies, some of the directors in this study discussed the need to change the internal cultures of the organizations they lead. Leadership that facilitates a culture that allows for the creation of a learning organization encourages the development, acquisition, transformation, and dissemination of new knowledge that can foster innovation, leading to effective best practices (Rijal, 2010). To succeed, directors must look at creating adhocracy cultures that are externally focused and emphasize flexibility, adaptability and change. This is the type of culture where teams are formed around projects and communication flows up the chain of command. The RSA vision, outlined in their technical assistance circular, directs VR agencies, where they can, to organize and integrate services by function rather than by program. To do this, eight of the directors in this study mentioned the need for additional FTEs to hire more permanent business account consultants. Culture change, as some directors pointed out, also requires training of both staff and partners, which requires funding and training resources.

All the directors in this study expressed the need to work with two sets of customers, the person with a disability and the employer community. VR agency directors should focus on and develop effective ways to interact and partner with the business community. Some VR agencies, by their own admission, seemed to do a better job with this than others. Clearly, the intent of the

WIOA legislation is to create stronger ties with the business community and the RSA-TAC-15-01 vision states that programs need to "enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce." VR directors need to find ways to obtain the resources needed within their budgets to effectively serve the business community's needs. There has always been "a need to balance existing need against available resources" (Shaw, 1997, p. 296).

The state-federal VR directors in this study all agreed that training for directors should be ongoing. The loss of the regional TACE centers has created a void in a place where directors could go for knowledgeable advice and training. Directors should continue to stay involved with CSAVR training activities and especially CSAVR's New Director training. The VR directors interviewed who had been through the CSAVR New Director training all thought highly of it and believed it had been worthwhile.

Implications for Rehabilitation Counselor Educators

Training for staff has been problematic, due to the loss of the TACE centers, with no readily available nearby resources for most but not all agencies. Directors continue to value staff with rehabilitation background and prefer a master's degree for VR counselors. While the CRC is not required in half the agencies interviewed, most thought it was a good idea. One-third of the agencies interviewed said they hire with a bachelor's degree in certain areas and some provide for a career ladder that includes a master's degree.

There is a need for staff with a background in rehabilitation counseling. Four of the 12 directors have created career ladders for those with bachelor's degrees, in order to encourage counselors to obtain their master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling. For those individuals hired with master's degrees in a related field, it would be helpful for educators to create

75

opportunities for those individuals to obtain the needed courses in order to be eligible for the CRC exam. While at least two directors preferred hiring those with a CRC, three directors believed it should be a goal for which counselors strive. Funding for master's degrees, obtaining and maintaining the CRC and continuing education for certification maintenance continue to be concerns for many VR agencies. Because a culture of continuous learning is necessary for organizations to have the "ability to meet the changing needs in rehabilitation service delivery" (Schultz, 2007), educators should work with state-federal VR directors on developing programs and funding for needed coursework to assure VR agency staff have the knowledge needed to successfully work with individuals with disabilities. Educators should consider working with VR agencies on developing educational programming for individuals hired at the bachelor's level as business consultants, as they are responsible for creating employment opportunities with business customers.

One VR director said he developed a list of knowledge, skills and abilities he would like for his staff to have. The other directors identified specific attributes they value in employees, such as being open-minded, having good communication skills, being public service-minded, being fairly quick-thinking on their feet, having common sense, having problem-solving skills, having computer skills and being willing to go above and beyond in their jobs. One director also mentioned a need to have a more diverse workforce in the agency. Because culture change is an integrative process, successful state-federal agencies will need to consider moving from traditionally hierarchical culture, with a focus on control, to a culture of adhocracy where the focus is on flexibility, risk-taking, partnerships and innovation (Sherman et al., 2014).

Implications for Policymakers and Funders

Though costs have increased, since the early 1990s state-federal rehabilitation agencies have essentially been level-funded (O'Brien & Graham, 2009). Some state-federal VR directors are experiencing difficulty with implementation, as well as administrative burdens, due to PET. The 15% set-aside affects some agencies more than others. Clarity is need around how the 15% set-aside for transition services will be measured. Additional concerns were around being level-funded and budget constraints, maintenance of efforts requirements and state match concerns. In the study interviews, there were also some concerns about unfunded WIOA requirements, and concerns with sub-minimum wage requirements.

Working with WIOA partners and providing those partners with training and education on disability were items that most agency directors felt they needed to be sure were accomplished. Because some agency staff are already "being stretched to capacity to serve," more resources were seen as needed by most of the state-federal VR directors in order to meet the goals of WIOA. Concerns about lack of technical assistance in complying with common performance measures were mentioned, as was getting WIOA partners to service people with disabilities that do not need VR's individualized services. More accurate and faster responses from RSA would be appreciated by VR directors, as all the directors interviewed have initiatives under way to meet the mandates of the new WIOA legislation. Technology was a theme in terms of creating integrated systems for use in a one-stop environment. VR agencies use a wide variety of IT and case-management systems, and many will need to be upgraded in order to comply with WIOA. Funding for IT will be critically important to enable IT infrastructure and case-management system upgrades capable of capturing all the needed WIOA data elements and allow for common intake with WIOA partners. The vision for WIOA outlined in the TAC-RSA-

15-01 also includes VR agency ability to provide customer access to services in one-stop centers and virtually. Funding may be needed to bring computer systems up-to-date for case-management systems and IT infrastructure that will allow for client access, where appropriate. Currently, state-federal VR agencies are working with limited funding to make those computer system upgrades and changes. RSA should consider ways to help state-federal VR agencies acquire funding to upgrade or replace out-of-date computer and case-management systems with WIOA-compliant systems.

Training is another area where many, but not all, agency directors are struggling to find funding and resources. The closing of the regional TACE centers was a recurring theme. VR directors discussed feeling the loss of having nearby expert technical assistance that is no longer available and has not been replaced. In addition to losing the training grants for staff training, the loss of this resource has been especially difficult as directors seek assistance with WIOA implementation. As one director put it, "losing the TACE centers was a blow to training." Directors are looking at innovative ways, such as using cost reimbursement, to fund training initiatives. Much training needs to be done with internal staff and external partners regarding WIOA. Creating cultures that transform agencies into learning organizations will be a necessary step for state-federal VR agencies in empowering staff towards innovation. While only half the agencies interviewed require a CRC for counseling staff, most directors saw value in staff obtaining a master's degree, and certification as a CRC was preferred. Agencies hiring at the bachelor's level would like additional funding to help their staff in obtaining higher education in rehabilitation counseling. The Rehabilitation Services Administration and other funders should consider ways to help state-federal VR agencies with funding for training activities, including training for internal staff, external partners and the funding of master's degrees in rehabilitation

counseling. Additional consideration should be given to funding and maintenance activities for staff to obtain and maintain their Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, the identified gold standard for rehabilitation counselors working with people with disabilities.

Implications for Rehabilitation Researchers

"The challenges of vocational rehabilitation have never been more evident, nor the need for more and better VR services been greater" (McMahon & Chan, 2011, p. 189). Fiscal, legislative, and leadership changes at the state and federals levels have over time changed the field of rehabilitation services (McFarlane et al., 2011). "Understanding the industry" (Atkinson, 1997, p. 251) is critical to moving rehabilitation agencies forward. Shaw, Leahy and Catalano (2006) noted that "challenges to the profession of rehabilitation counseling have frequently been cited in the rehabilitation counseling literature." With the passage in 2014 of the new WIOA legislation, state-federal VR agencies will be required to increase collaboration and partnerships at a time of level or decreasing funding for agencies. At the same time, two of the 12 agency directors have already left or retired and a third director will be retiring in the near future. Changes are occurring in the make-up of directors, as more will continue to retire and be replaced with newer, less experienced directors. Programs like CSAVR's New Director training and San Diego State's Interwork program are valued by directors, who hope they will continue. As changes come to state-federal VR agencies and directors are replaced, it is important to study what these changes mean to the field of rehabilitation and what training and education will be needed by the VR directors of the future. Few studies have been done specifically looking at state-federal VR directors and how they view the VR program. The need for more studies with VR directors and their implementation of the new WIOA legislation is necessary to determine the impact of WIOA on VR agencies and those they serve. There is a need for more research on

evidence-based practices and how VR agencies can utilize and monitor the effectiveness of EBP in practice in order to achieve more successful outcomes, particularly with the increased emphasis on transition. Research will be needed to measure effectiveness of the culture change occurring within state-federal VR agencies in order to provide the empirical evidence needed to determine if changes in the VR program are leading to greater agency success.

Study Limitations

This study looked at 12 state-federal VR directors, those individuals charged with carrying out the mandates and goals of the state-federal VR program, from general or combined agencies in the continental United States. The agency directors selected for this study lead VR agencies defined as higher-performing, based on published data from the FY 2011, 2012 and 2013 RSA federal indicators. This study sought to understand the challenges and needs of the state-federal VR program from the director's perspective and to determine how these directors see the future of the public VR program. There are several limitations to be noted.

The study has addressed the perspective of only 12 state-federal VR directors leading agencies in the continental United States. While these 12 directors are or were in charge of the identified higher-performing agencies, it must be noted that not all of the directors interviewed were leading their agencies during the time of the three years of data used to define the sample for this study. In addition, two of the directors interviewed are no longer leading their agencies. One director has retired since the interview and one director was in an acting capacity and has since been replaced. The perspectives of the directors interviewed cannot be generalized as the perspective of all directors leading state-federal VR programs. The RSA Technical Assistance Circular (RSA-TAC-15-01) discussing RSA's vision for the one-stop system under WIOA came

out on August 13, 2015, and therefore was not available as a roadmap for agencies at the time the interviews took place.

The researcher conducting the study worked for over 28 years in the state-federal VR program and was in management at a state-federal VR agency for 20 of those years. Qualitative research design allows the researcher to be highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants and develop a level of detail about an individual or place. Qualitative research, in general, is subject to personal biases and this study is no exception. Because the researcher was familiar with state-federal VR agency operations, the respondents may have felt more comfortable in sharing information they knew would be understood. Familiarity with state-federal agency operations may have enabled the researcher to ask probes to questions that other researchers may not have asked due to researcher familiarity. On the other hand, because the researcher was known as a former state administrator, there may have been answers to questions that were not given depending on the comfort level of the director.

The researcher discussed personal biases regularly with her advisor and mentor to assist with recognition of her biases. Two Ph.D.-level educators/researchers were enlisted to help with independent coding of the data collected, as well as theme development, to increase reliability and validity of the research findings. A Ph.D.-level educator/researcher audited the study throughout the process, providing feedback on the entire study.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand the challenges and needs of the state-federal VR program from the director's perspective and to determine how these directors see the future of the public VR program. McFarlane, Schroeder and Enriquez (2014) wrote that the challenge is to ensure continuity in our government support systems for workforce development that addresses both the

unique needs of the individual with a disability and the organizational systems through which public policies are carried out. The findings from this study may be able to assist stakeholders in understanding and developing resources and supports that state-federal VR directors believe are needed in order to successfully operate public VR programs into the future. The study may be useful in helping administrators of state-federal VR agencies gain insights that could potentially enhance the future of the public rehabilitation program. It will be important to continue to examine "How do state-federal VR directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?" as WIOA implementation continues.

Sherman et al. found that leaders of successful VR agencies "emphasize the use of outcome-focused business models by adopting organizational innovations and harnessing advances in information technologies to deliver outcomes that individuals, communities and society at large value" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 151). Several directors interviewed for this study believe that culture change will need to occur within their agencies to set the stage for innovative service delivery within the Workforce system. Executive leadership sets the tone to create cultures that have the potential to transform agencies into learning organizations and that empower staff towards innovation. VR directors will need to look at how their agencies, as part of a one stop-service delivery system, can best provide evidence-based services to two sets of customers in order to increase successful outcomes, with metrics to measure results.

Funding continues to be a concern facing state-federal rehabilitation agency directors. Training grant dollars previously used for staff development will now become part of an agency's general allotment. More training is needed for VR staff and Workforce partners at a time when training budgets have merged into agency general budgets and regional TACE centers

are no longer being funded. It will be important to develop resources for training and technical

assistance that will allow expert advice by entities that understand the various VR agencies'

specific needs.

VR agencies are now required to set aside 15% of their budgets for pre-employment

transition services (Schroeder, 2014). Several directors discussed their concerns over WIOA

PET mandates that are "forcing us to reallocate resources to schools and the delivery of those

services." Funding may be needed for hiring additional staff, including business consultants, to

work more closely with employer customers.

Technology improvements will be needed by many state-federal VR agencies in order to

meet the RSA vision in TAC-RSA-15-01 to "Use an integrated and expert intake process for all

customers entering the one-stop centers." Systems that collect the necessary RSA data, allow for

common intake, and that can be accessed by customers in a virtual environment are

improvements expected by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Today, many state-

federal VR agencies are using a variety of case-management and IT infrastructure systems,

including some that are "homegrown" systems. Updating computer hardware and software can

be expensive purchases for VR agency budgets. Thought and planning will need to go into the

funding and updating VR agency IT hardware and software systems.

Collaboration and partnership development were themes throughout the VR director

interviews. McFarlane et al. suggest that the leadership question of our time is about how state-

federal VR directors lead during "times of substantive changes with enormously challenging

fiscal realities" (McFarlane et al., 2011, p. 5). It is the expectation of RSA's vision of VR

agencies that those agencies participate in "robust partnership among partners." The VR

directors in this study discussed the need for many collaborative partnerships with not only

WIOA partners, but also with school systems and vendors who provide services to VR customers. Providing VR agencies with technical assistance in their collaboration efforts, and the training of their partners, should be part of any plan to assist VR agencies in successfully implementing the WIOA vision and creating a sustainable future for state-federal VR programs.

VR agencies would be well served by developing an organizational culture of adhocracy that facilitates transformational learning, creating learning organizations, particularly given the increasing complexity of service provision and the increasing demands for successful outcomes. Culture influences what employees view as important and not important. "Organizations thrive when the organizational culture facilitates buy-in, creativity, and personal involvement of professional staff" (Schultz, 2008, p. 40). The "effect of leadership behaviors on organizational culture is important to organizational success and effectiveness" (Sherman et al., 2014, p. 115). Transformational leaders can change and expand the interests of their followers, and generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the organization. The creation of such leadership for state-federal VR agencies should enhance the ability of the organizations to develop the infrastructure necessary to develop staff, create working partnerships and improve customer outcomes.

Conceptual Framework with Findings

Given the findings of this study, the original framework was modified to be more consistent with observations and comments provided by the state directors. Figure 10 represents a revised depiction of the initial conceptual framework which shows how funding and expectations flow through legislation to fund state-federal VR agencies, from various state, federal and private stakeholders, and those agencies' expectations of accountability for funding and service provision. In order to obtain funding, there are expectations for accountability that

flow to the state-federal VR agency, to the VR director, through whom the organization's culture can create a learning organization that may enable staff to provide evidence-based services to agency customers, thereby facilitating the opportunity (i.e., successful) outcomes, which in turn can provide the accountability funders are expecting for continued financial support of the legislation, enabling VR agencies to continue to provide services to agency customers. Revisions of this framework with the findings of this study show that technology will be an influence on the organization. Culture change will affect the entire organization as collaboration and partnerships increase and there is increased pressure to provide services as part of the one-stop services delivery system.
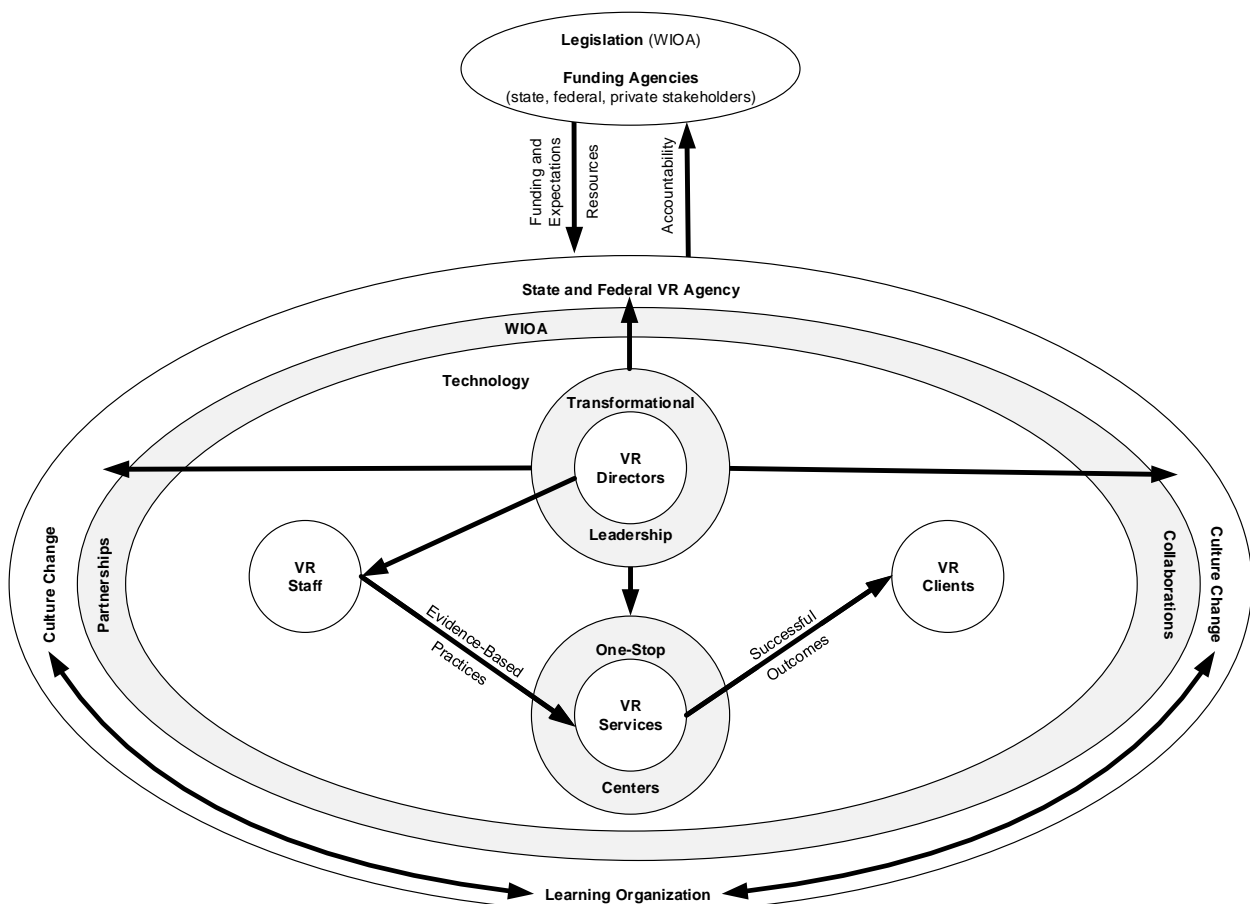
Figure 10. Conceptual Framework with Findings

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Institutional Review Boards Approval

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDS (IRBs)

Application: IRB History

| BACK TO IRB LIST | HOME | CONTACT IRB | CLOSE WINDOW |

IRB#	PI	TITLE	REVIEW LEVEL	RECENT APPROVAL	EXPIRATION DATE	STATUS
x15-540e	Michael Leahy	State-Federal VR Director Perceptions of Program Challenges, Needs, and the Future of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Exempt			Determined Exempt

View Personnel List & Training Status

IRB HISTORY

APP#	APPLICATION TYPE	DATE STARTED	DATE SUBMITTED	DATE APPROVED	SELECT ACTION
i048844	INITIAL APPLICATION	5/11/2015	5/11/2015	5/18/2015	Select Record Action ▾

Figure 11. Institutional Review Board Online Form

Dear Investigator(s),

Your new application has been approved.

Title: State-Federal VR Director Perceptions of Program Challenges, Needs, and the Future of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program
IRB Number: x15-540e; i048844

You may view and print the approval letter and any corresponding documents from the on-line system by clicking on the IRB number. Select record action for the specific application number (i.e., the "i" or "r" number), select view approval documents and click "Go!" There will be a hyperlink for each individual approval document. Please note, the primary investigator is responsible for ensuring that all individuals involved with this protocol have successfully completed IRB human subject training prior to any contact with human subjects or their identifiable data. Such training must remain valid during the duration of the research project.

Please do not respond to this e-mail. If you have questions or concerns regarding your IRB protocol, please contact the IRB at irb@msu.edu.

Good luck with your research.

IRB Staff
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Human Research Protection Programs
Biomedical and Health Institutional Review Board (BIRB)
Community Research Institutional Review Board (CRIRB)
Social Science/Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB)
Office of Regulatory Affairs
408 West Circle Drive, Room 207 Olds Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1046
Phone: (517) 355-2180
Fax: (517) 432-4503
Email: IRB@msu.edu
Website: www.hrpp.msu.edu

Figure 12. IRB Approval Letter Email

Appendix B. CSAVR Agreement to Support Study

From: John Connelly
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2015 8:49 AM
To: 'Susan Sherman'
Cc: Kathleen West-Evans; swooderson@rehabnetwork.org; Theresa Hamrick; 'Schultz, Mark'
Subject: RE: Research Committee Request - Michigan State PhD Candidate

Good Morning Susan

I am writing to inform you that CSAVR is endorsing your research request. Congratulations.

As you noted in your email to me requesting approval, your study should better inform our field of the thoughts and perspectives of Directors leading high preforming state agencies. Moving forward hopefully their peers can benefit from the information to continue to strengthen their agencies. To this end then CSAVR will require that you share the study results with us and agree to present the information to our membership. We have several means for doing this such as the Monthly Membership Call and we can discuss the vehicle once the study is complete and you have compiled the information. CSAVR believes that the information that will be generated by your study will be of benefit in planning for technical assistance and training within CSAVR.

I am providing you below the names of the Directors of the agencies you have noted. I cannot provide you their personal emails. In terms of contacting them, please then go to their agency website where there is listed the general contact information for the agency. CSAVR will notify each Director in question of the approval of your study so that they will be expecting your call.

One suggestion for your survey is to include a question about the possible influence of the location of the agency within state government and the ability of the Director to independently make decisions. We think this factor does have bearing on the success of the agency and would like to have more data and a better understanding as to its impact on the integrity of the program. If this question could be added to your survey, it would be appreciated.

Please be aware that the Utah Combined, Oregon General, and Kentucky General Directors have changed since the first of the year. I am not sure if this impacts your approach.

Please keep in touch, Susan. We wish you the best of luck with your study and look forward to the results. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

John

Figure 13. CSAVR Agreement to Support Study Email

Appendix C. CSAVR Research Endorsement

Tue 6/9/2015 2:23 PM

John Connelly <JConnelly@Rehabnetwork.org>

RE: Research Committee Request - Michigan State PhD Candidate

To   Susan Sherman

Cc   Stephen Wooderson

ⓘ You forwarded this message on 6/9/2015 4:51 PM.

Hi Susan:

Glad you are back and hope your trip went well. Please find below the email that was sent to Directors and an article concerning the endorsement that went out to all 80 Directors as part of our CEO's Weekly Report. The article appeared in the Weekly that went out the end of May.

Please let me know if there is anything else we can help you with. I hope the project goes well for you.

John

CSAVR Research Endorsement:

This past week CSAVR endorsed a research request from a former state VR agency employee who is pursuing her PhD. She is focused on bringing some of the real world experience to the education of VR staff and leadership. As part of her dissertation, she plans to do on-line interviews of the VR Directors of state agencies she identified that have met at least 5 of their 6 indicators over the past year. CSAVR feels that the interviews will yield information that can be used to inform future trainings and conference topics. We have asked that she plan to share her general findings with us when the research is complete. We have reached out to the Directors in question to solicit their support for the project and thank them in advance for their time and insights.

From: John Connelly <jconnelly@rehabnetwork.org>
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at 10:14 AM
To: Cheryl Walsh <cheryl.walsh@alaska.gov>, David Mitchell <David.Mitchell@iowa.gov>, Buddy Hoskinson <Buddy.hoskinson@ky.gov>, "Butch.McMillan@mdrs.state.ms.us" <Butch.McMillan@mdrs.state.ms.us>, Mark Schultz <mark.schultz@nebraska.gov>, "Hatz, Lisa" <Lisa.Hatz@doe.nh.gov>, Joe Cordova <jcordova@okdrs.gov>, "Trina M. Lee" <Trina.M.Lee@state.or.us>, Eric Weiss <Eric.Weiss@state.sd.us>, Donna Ashworth <donna.l.ashworth@wv.gov>, Mike Greco <Michael.Greco@dwd.wisconsin.gov>, Jim McIntosh <jmcint@wyo.gov>, "sjones@utah.gov" <sjones@utah.gov>
Cc: Stephen Wooderson <swooderson@rehabnetwork.org>
Subject: Research Request Endorsement

Good Morning

CSAVR received and this week endorsed a research request from Susan Sherman, who was on the leadership team for the Georgia VR agency, retired and is now pursuing her PhD at Michigan State. You may know Susan. She has been involved in NRA, CORE and is the incoming President of CRC. She is focused on bringing some of the real world experience to the education of VR staff and leadership. I think we can all appreciate that perspective.

As part of her dissertation, she would like to interview each of you to learn your secrets to success (my interpretation). She selected you because your agencies have met at least 5 of their 6 indicators over the past few years.

Per Susan, the interviews would be conducted online through a "Skype-like" platform. This research is an off-shoot of the RRTC on Evidence Based Practices of which CSAVR is a partner.

CSAVR has asked that Susan share her results with us at the end of her study. We wish to learn from you too and think that this is a wonderful opportunity to gain information that will be very helpful. The CSAVR Research Committee in endorsing this request noted that the information gained will be of benefit to us as we plan for technical assistance and training within CSAVR.

In contacting you we have asked that Susan go to your agency website and use the general contact information listed there to reach you.

We know that you are all busy. We want to thank you for participating in the study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

John

Figure 14. CSAVR Research Endorsement

Appendix D. Study Participant Invitation Letter to VR Directors

From: Susan Sherman
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 1:42 PM
Subject: State VR Director Participation Response Needed ASAP for a CSAVR Approved Research Study

June 10, 2015

Dear   :

I am excited to be contacting you to request your involvement in a dissertation research project involving State Directors. This research has been approved through the research committee of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). It has also been approved through the institutional review board (IRB) at Michigan State University, receiving approval on 5/18/15 as IRB # x15-540e.

The primary research question that will guide this study is: How do State-Federal VR Directors view the future of the public rehabilitation program and what resources do they believe they need to create or to enhance their agencies' success in light of the changes occurring in the field?

The purpose of this study is to provide an in depth examination and discussion of the findings from a qualitative multiple case study of 13 state-federal VR directors, selected from general and combined agencies in the continental United States who were higher performing state-federal VR programs. The findings from this study may be able to assist stakeholders in understanding and developing resources and supports that the state-federal VR directors believe are needed in order to successfully operate public VR programs into the future. The results will be part of a dissertation that will be shared with my dissertation committee at Michigan State University. Professor Michael Leahy is my dissertation chair.

In case you may not know me, I retired from the State of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation as the Assistant Vocational Rehabilitation Director, with over 28 years of service, in July 2011. I then proceeded to work on my PhD in Rehabilitation Counselor Education at Michigan State University. This research study is for completion of my dissertation at Michigan State University.

I am looking forward to interviewing you through a program called Zoom, which is similar to Skype. I anticipate the interview to last no longer than 90 minutes. Once our interview is completed, a transcript will be developed and sent to you to insure its accuracy. Upon completion of the interviews, the data will be written up for my dissertation defense. You will receive all information developed for your agency for your review before completion of the research project.

The next step is for you to return to me the attached informed consent form and provide information on your availability of dates/times to be interviewed within the next 45 days to [*personal email address*] in order for me to set up your scheduled interview as soon as possible.

Should you have any questions, you may email me at [*personal email address*] or sherm221@msu.edu or call me at [*personal telephone number*].

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project.

Susan G. Sherman MS, CPM, LPC, CRC

Doctoral Candidate

Michigan State University

Figure 15. Study Participant Invitation Letter to VR Directors

Research Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study on state-federal VR director perceptions of the future of the VR program and its challenges and needs. We are asking you to take part in this study because you have been identified as a state-federal VR director in charge of a high performing agency. Please read this form carefully and email me any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how state-federal VR directors from high performing agencies view the future of the public rehabilitation program and your perspective on the resources needed to create or enhance agency success in light of changes occurring in the field. You must be over 18 and a state-federal VR director of a higher performing program to participate in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you using Skype or Zoom. The interview will include questions about your perceptions of the future of the VR program over the next decade and the resources needed to achieve that future. The interview will take about 1 hour. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview. You will have the opportunity to comment on information we discuss once it is written up.

Risks and benefits:

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

There are no benefits to you. My hope is that this study will lead to further research and identification of resources to help state-federal VR agencies create or enhance their agency successes.

Compensation: There will be no compensation provided for participation in this study.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file or on the cloud; only the researchers and a transcriptionist will have access to the records. After we tape-record the Skype or Zoom interview, we will destroy the tape after it has been transcribed, which we anticipate will be within six months of its taping.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, there will be no consequences. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Susan Sherman and Dr. Michael Leahy. Dr. Sara Johnston, Dr. Mary Barros-Bailey and Dr. Cayte Anderson will assist Susan Sherman in reviewing the information collected from the transcript to insure accuracy of the data. Please feel free to email Susan at sherm221@msu.edu with any questions you might have. This study is part of a dissertation being done at Michigan State University. The researcher, Susan Sherman, retired as an Assistant Director with over 28 years of service in the public rehabilitation program.

If you have questions later, you may contact Susan at sherm221@msu.edu . You can reach Dr. Michael Leahy at leahym@msu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 517-355-2180, email them at irb@msu.edu or access their website at http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. Please email Susan Sherman with your signed consent form at sherm221@msu.edu.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

By continuing with the interview, I voluntarily consent to participate in the research study and the taping of the interview.

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on May 18, 2015.

Appendix F. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Demographic Section

    Name:

    Title:

    State:

    Years in position:

    Previous position:

    Years with current agency:

    Years in public rehabilitation:

    Highest level of education:

    Degree(s):

    Certifications/licenses held:

1. Future of the VR Program

    a. Where do you see the VR program going in in the next decade and what will it be like?

    b. What will it take to get there?

    c. Are there any concerns?

2. Rehabilitation Legislation

    a. In light of the recently reauthorized Rehabilitation Act as Title IV of WIOA, how can the service delivery system be improved upon to meet the needs of people with disabilities?

    b. Do you see changes in the WIOA affecting your organization? If so, please discuss the different ways you believe these changes will affect your agency.

3. Agency Actions

   a. In what ways can does or can your agency maintain the values of the rehabilitation process, while working in a larger context of collaboration and partnership as part of an integrated workforce system?

   b. What actions have you taken in striving to make your agency performance what you believe it should be? What additional resources would assist you?

   c. What resources (funding, partnerships, training, additional staff, etc.) do you believe your organization needs to: 1) maintain the level of success you are experiencing today, and 2) move your organizations to a higher degree of success given your agency's mission?

4. Societal Advancements for People with Disabilities

   a. In what ways have you, or are you, positioning your agency to influence and create a better world for people with disabilities, instead of just reacting to outside forces?

   b. In what ways do you use your position as State Director to create a better world for people with disabilities?

5. State Director Activities

   a. What resources (funding, partnerships, training, education, certifications, etc.) do you feel you need for yourself to continue being successful in your position as a State Director?

   b. What specific activities have you undertaken to position your agency to be successful in a time of diminishing resources? What types of resources or assistance do you believe would benefit you in carrying out those activities?

c. Since becoming a State Director, what training have you received? Who provided the training? Do you believe training as a state director should be time-limited or on-going?

6. Agency Policies

a. When policy is created in your organization, is it designed to help the organization conform to a law or regulation or is it designed to benefit the person receiving the services or both? Please provide some specific examples.

b. How are financial policies for the authorization of consumer services developed and what factors are considered when making such policies?

c. What efforts, if any, are there to provide financial or other decision making at the local level?

7. Staffing and Training

a. When selecting personnel to work in your agency, what do you believe should be the necessary attitudes, knowledge, skills and abilities?

b. Do you believe your VR counseling staff should be certified as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors? Why or why not?

c. How do you support and fund training and personnel development in your organization?

Appendix G. Zoom Invitation

Thu 6/11/2015 1:19 PM

sgsherman58@gmail.com

Please join Zoom meeting in progress

To   Susan Sherman

Hi there,

You are invited to a Zoom meeting now.

Join from PC, Mac, iOS or Android: https://msu.zoom.us/j/872310598

Or join by phone:

   +1 415 762 9988 or +1 646 568 7788 US Toll
   Meeting ID: 872 310 598
   International numbers available: https://msu.zoom.us/zoomconference

Or join from a H.323/SIP room system:

   Dial: 162.255.36.11 (US West) or 162.255.37.11 (US East)
   Meeting ID: 872 310 598

Figure 16. Zoom Meeting Invitation

Appendix H. RSA-TAC-15-01

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

<div align="center">
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
CIRCULAR RSA-TAC-15-01
DATE: August 13, 2015
</div>

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
                      AGENCIES STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS
                      CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: Vision for the One-Stop Delivery System under the Workforce
                      Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

PURPOSE: This Technical Assistance Circular (TAC) lays out the vision for the one-stop delivery system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and links to key technical assistance resources to support States and local areas as they integrate this vision into their one-stop delivery system. Separate guidance is being issued by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and the Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to their grantees who are partners in the workforce development system. It was developed in collaboration with these agencies, as well as with the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

WIOA, which was signed into law on July 22, 2014, is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA supersedes titles I and II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Departments of Labor and Education published a set of proposed regulations for implementing WIOA in five Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) in the Federal Register on April 15, 2015, with a 60-day public comment period. The Departments will review, analyze, and consider the thousands of comments received in response to the NPRMs. The Final rule will be published in 2016.

In order to assist States in implementing the requirements of WIOA prior to the Final rules, RSA will issue a series of operating guidance in the

form of TACs, such as this, which will assist the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies with the important planning and organizational work necessary to comply with the WIOA statutory requirements. The operating guidance TACs will provide a framework for program activities until the regulations are finalized.

REFERENCES: See Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND: The vision for the one-stop delivery system contained in this TAC reflects the long-standing and ongoing work of dedicated workforce professionals around the country to align a wide range of publicly and privately funded education, employment, and training programs while also providing high-quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses through the one-stop delivery system.

The creation of one-stop centers (currently branded as American Job Centers) was a cornerstone of WIA when it passed in 1998. In the years between the passage of WIA and WIOA — and longer for those communities that piloted one-stop centers under the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 — the workforce system has tested a variety of approaches to maximize the benefits of one-stop centers to its direct customers and their communities. In the last 10 years, technological advancements have opened up new avenues of service delivery, and the increased availability of evidence-based models has strengthened our shared understanding of the best of these approaches. In addition, the Obama Administration worked intensively with federal agencies in 2013 and 2014 to reform federal employment, education, and training programs to create a more integrated, job-driven service delivery system. A job-driven service delivery system is one that results in linking our nation's diverse talent with employers and businesses. As a result of this work, one-stop centers continue to be a valued community resource, known both locally and nationally as an important source of assistance for those looking for work or workers, and those looking for opportunities to grow their careers.

WIOA recognizes the value of the one-stop delivery system, and provides the workforce system with important tools to enhance the quality of its one-stop centers. The law strengthens the ability of States, regions, and local areas to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development to regional in-demand jobs. It also places greater emphasis on achieving results for job seekers, workers, and businesses. Finally, it reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for one-stop centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to obtain good jobs and stay employed; and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current

workforce.

Since the one-stop delivery system was established, technology has made lasting changes to our economy and society. Mobile workers and businesses with regional and national footprints that cross municipal borders are much more common. For that reason, there is an increased customer demand for consistent, high-quality education, employment, and training services across the country. The passage of WIOA supports the workforce system in meeting that demand, and the adoption of a national vision for the one-stop delivery system and its one-stop centers is an important first step in that work.

VISION FOR THE ONE-STOP CENTERS UNDER WIOA:

The publicly funded workforce system envisioned by WIOA is quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. It is designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, particularly those with barriers to employment. It aligns workforce development, education, and economic development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers, and provide a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system. This is accomplished by providing all customers access to high-quality one-stop centers that connect them with the full range of services available in their communities, whether they are looking to find jobs, build basic educational or occupational skills, earn a postsecondary certificate or degree, or obtain guidance on how to make career choices, or are businesses and employers seeking skilled workers.

Under WIOA, partner programs and entities that are jointly responsible for workforce and economic development, educational, and other human resource programs collaborate to create a seamless customer-focused one-stop delivery system that integrates service delivery across all programs and enhances access to the programs' services. The one-stop delivery system includes six core programs (Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs; Title II adult education and literacy programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser program; and Title IV vocational rehabilitation program), as well as other required and optional partners identified in WIOA.[1]

---

[1] In addition to the core programs, required partners include the Senior Community Service Employment Program; job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans authorized under chapter 41 of title 38; career and technical postsecondary education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006; Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs; employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment and training programs; Unemployment Compensation programs; programs authorized under the Second Chance Act of 2007, Section 212 (reintegration of ex-offenders); and programs authorized under the Social Security Act Title IV,

Through the one-stop centers, these partner programs and their service providers ensure that businesses and job seekers — a shared client base across the multiple programs identified above — have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes.

Under WIOA, one-stop centers and their partners:

- provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages;
- provide access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers;
- enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce;
- participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of one-stop centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations;
- ensure that high-quality integrated data inform decisions made by policymakers, employers, and job seekers.

The management of the one-stop delivery system is the shared responsibility of States, local boards, elected officials, the core WIOA partners, other required partners, and one-stop center operators. The Departments encourage all of these entities to integrate the characteristics below into their work, including developing state, regional, and local strategic plans; establishing one-stop center certification criteria; examining the state, regional, and local footprint of one-stop centers; conducting competitions for selecting one-stop center operators; developing local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs); updating other one-stop center policies and procedures; and operating and delivering services through the one-stop centers.

Part A (TANF), unless the Governor determines that TANF is not a required partner.

Optional partners may include, with the approval of the local board and chief elected officials, the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) employment and training program (i.e. Ticket to Work programs); Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training programs; the Vocational Rehabilitation Client Assistance Program; National and Community Service Act Programs; and other employment, education, or training programs such as those operated by libraries or in the private sector.

CHARACTERISTICS
OF A
HIGH-QUALITY
ONE-STOP CENTER:

The characteristics identified below, consistent with the purpose and authorized scope of each of the programs, are designed to reflect elements that the Departments believe contribute to a high-quality one-stop delivery system. They demonstrate the spirit and intent of WIOA, and the Departments believe they will strengthen the successful integration and implementation of partner programs in one-stop centers. For clarity and readability the characteristics have been grouped into three functional categories: (a) Customer Service; (b) Innovation and Service Design; and
(c) Systems Integration and High-Quality Staffing.

a. **One-Stop Centers Provide Excellent Customer Service to Job Seekers, Workers, and Businesses**. Meeting the needs of job seekers, workers, and businesses is important in developing thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper. High- quality one-stop centers:

- **Reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the one-stop centers**. All one-stop center staff are courteous, polite, responsive, and helpful to job seekers, businesses, and others who visit the one-stop centers, either in person or by telephone or email. Moreover, one-stop center staff are sensitive to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and are prepared to provide necessary accommodations.

- **Develop, offer, and deliver quality business services** To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, one-stop center staff identify and have a clear understanding of industry skill needs, identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinate business services activities across one-stop center partner programs, as appropriate. This includes the incorporation of an integrated and aligned business services strategy among one-stop center partners to present a unified voice for the one-stop center in its communications with employers. Additionally, one-stop centers use the forthcoming performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.

- **Improve the skills of job seeker and worker customers**. One-stop centers offer access to education and training leading to industry- recognized credentials through the use of career pathways,

apprenticeships, and other strategies that enable customers, including those with disabilities, to compete successfully in today's global economy. They provide businesses with access to the quantity and quality of talent they need and support upskill/backfill strategies that expand job opportunities in the community.

- **Create opportunities for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience** by providing customers, including those with disabilities, as much timely, labor market, job-driven information and choice as possible related to education and training, careers, and service delivery options, while offering customers the opportunity to receive both skill-development and job placement services.

- **Provide career services that motivate, support, and empower customers**, including individuals with disabilities, to make informed decisions based on local and regional economic demand and effectively attain their personal employment and education goals.

- **Value skill development** by assessing and improving each individual's basic, occupational, and employability skills.

b. **One-Stop Centers Reflect Innovative and Effective Service Design**.
High-quality one-stop centers:

- **Use an integrated and expert intake process for all customers entering the one-stop centers**. Frontline staff are highly familiar with the functions and basic eligibility requirements of each program, and can appropriately assist customers and make knowledgeable referrals to partner programs, as needed and as appropriate given the authorized scope of the program.

- **Design and implement practices that actively engage industry sectors** and use economic and labor market information, sector strategies, career pathways, Registered Apprenticeships, and competency models to help drive skill-based initiatives.

- **Balance traditional labor exchange services with strategic talent development** within a regional economy. This includes use of market-driven principles and labor market information that help to define a regional economy, its demographics, its workforce and its assets and gaps in skills and resources.

- **Ensure meaningful access to all customers**. One-stop centers must be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. In so doing, one-stop centers use principles of universal design and human-centered design, such as

flexibility in space usage; the use of pictorial, written, verbal, and tactile modes to present information for customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency; providing clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users; providing necessary accommodations; and providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants. One-stop centers use assistive technology and flexible business hours to meet the range of customer needs.

- **Include both virtual and center-based service delivery** for job seekers, workers, and employers. Both methods of delivery support the talent needs of the regional economy, although each may better serve different customers with different levels of service needs at any given time. The one-stop delivery system can expand its reach by delivering robust virtual services and increasing the accessibility of those services through community partners, such as libraries, community and faith-based organizations, and other partners.

- **Incorporate innovative and evidence-based delivery models** that improve the integration of education and training, create career pathways that lead to industry-recognized credentials, encourage work-based learning, and use state-of-the-art technology to accelerate learning and promote college and career success.

  c. **One-Stop Centers Operate with Integrated Management Systems and High-Quality Staffing**. High-quality one-stop centers:

- **Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners**. The one-stop center operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the core partners and other one-stop center partners.

- **Organize and integrate services by function** (rather than by program), when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having one-stop center staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams, e.g. Skills Development Team, Business Services Team. Service integration focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

  - **Develop and maintain integrated case management systems** that inform customer service throughout the customer's interaction with the integrated system and allow information collected from customers at intake to be captured once. Customer information is properly secured in accordance with personally identifiable information

guidelines, and facilitated as appropriate, with the necessary memoranda of understanding or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements, consistent with federal and state privacy laws and regulations. Data, however, would be shared with other programs, for those programs' purposes, within the one-stop system only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.

- **Develop and implement operational policies** that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, and use technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings.

- **Use common performance indicators** to ensure that federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, labor market driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers. Center performance is transparent and accountable to the communities and regions served; data entry staff are trained and understand the importance of data validation, data collection processes, and the importance of accurate reporting.

- **Train and equip one-stop center staff** in an ongoing learning process with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to provide superior service to job seekers, including those with disabilities, and businesses in an integrated, regionally focused framework of service delivery. Center staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. Cross-training allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. Center staff are routinely trained and are keenly aware as to how their particular function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local board.

- **Staff the center with highly trained career counselors**, skilled in advising job seekers of their options, knowledgeable about local labor market dynamics, aware of available services inside and outside the one-stop center, and skilled in developing customers' skills for employment success.

RESOURCES:

Along with the resources provided at the WIOA collections page at http://wioa.workforce3one.org, the following technical assistance tools are currently available as part of the Departments' ongoing effort to support

state and local areas in the adoption of the vision for the one-stop centers under WIOA.

a. <u>Provide Excellent Customer Service to Job Seekers, Workers and Employers</u>.

- <u>Opening Doors for Everyone: Providing Outstanding Customer Service at One-Stop Career Centers</u>: This toolkit is designed to provide one-stop center staff members an enhanced level of comfort when providing service to customers with a diverse array of backgrounds and needs.
https://wioa.workforce3one.org/view/2001501480321360042/info

- <u>Expanding Business Engagement</u>: WIOA makes significant changes to the nation's workforce development system, expressly incorporating the sector strategies approach throughout and requiring regional planning and alignment with local labor market needs for in-demand sectors and occupations. The Expanding Business Engagement (EBE) - Technical Assistance (TA) Initiative will support the strategic planning and implementation of revitalized or enhanced business engagement activities within states, regions, and local areas.
http://businessengagement.workforce3one.org

b. <u>Reflect Innovative and Effective Service Design</u>.

- <u>One-Stop Service Design</u>: The resources section contains a variety of curated technical assistance tools, best practices, replicable models, implementation plans, recorded webinars, videos, research documents, and data reports to support innovative and effective one-stop center service design.
https://wioa.workforce3one.org/ws/wioa/pages/resources.aspx?pparams=1001501462393639983

- <u>Legacy Disability Training: Understanding Disability</u>: The purpose of this introductory course is to provide practical learning experience, toward acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to provide quality workforce development services to persons with disabilities.
https://wioa.workforce3one.org/view/4011507054815454755/info

c. <u>Integrated Administrative Systems and High-Quality Staffing</u>.

- <u>Integrated Service Delivery Toolkit</u>: This toolkit provides ideas, strategies and resources for integrating service delivery in the public workforce system.
https://wioa.workforce3one.org/view/2001508963127430705/info

- Effective Case Management: This site contains resources and tools designed to help system administrators, local leaders and staff to support high-quality case management in the workforce system. https://effectivecasemanagement.workforce3one.org/index.aspx

d. **Other One-Stop Vision Technical Assistance Tools.**

- One-Stop Career Centers Fact Sheet: Provides highlights of WIOA reforms for one-stop centers. https://wioa.workforce3one.org/view/2001507734890961606/info

- Quick Start Action Plan (QSAP) for One-Stop Centers: An interactive, self-paced assessment tool designed to help leaders at all levels of the public workforce system prepare for implementation of WIOA. The QSAP helps identify areas of strength and focused areas for improvement in a state or local workforce system and connects to targeted resources that can help leaders to prepare and plan effectively. http://qsap.workforce3one.org/page/planner/OneStop/Questionnaire

ACTION
REQUESTED:

As WIOA core programs and partners at the State and local level implement WIOA in program year 2015, the Departments encourage states to adopt this vision and build it into the policies and procedures related to the management of the one-stop delivery system. This includes developing regional, and local strategic plans; establishing certification criteria for one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery system; examining the State, regional, and local footprint of one-stop centers; conducting competitions for selecting one-stop center operators; developing the local MOU; and updating other one-stop center policies and procedures.

SUMMARY:

WIOA increases the accountability of core WIOA programs, including the VR program, to place emphasis on promoting better alignment among Federal job training programs. This vision reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for one-stop centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to obtain good jobs and stay employed; and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

INQUIRIES: David Jones
                  Vocational Rehabilitation Program Unit
                  (202) 245-7356
                  david.jones@ed.gov

                                          /s/
                                          Janet L. LaBreck
                                          Commissioner

Attachment

cc: Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
        National Council of State Agencies for the Blind
        National Disability Rights Network

Attachment 1 - References for the One-Stop Vision

- WIOA (Pub. L. 113-128);
- WIA (Pub. L. 105-220), Title I;
- TEGL No. 3-14, *Implementing a Job-Driven Workforce System*, July 30, 2014;
- TEN No. 5-14, *WIOA Announcement and Initial Informational Resources*, July 22, 2014;
- TEN No. 6-14*, Information for Stakeholder Engagement for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Implementation*, August 15, 2014;
- TEGL No. 12-14, *Allowable Uses and Funding Limits of WIA Program Year 2014 Funds for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Transitional Activitie*s, October 28, 2014;
- TEGL No. 15-14, *Implementation of the New Uniform Guidance Regulations*, December 19, 2014;
- TEGL No. 19-14, *Vision for the Workforce System and Initial Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* dated February 19, 2015 http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=7353; and
- WIOA implementation dates, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/WIOA-Key- Implementation-Dates_Acc.pdf
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions.* Pages 20573-20687 [FR DOC# 2015-05528] (joint).
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.* Pages 20689-20966 [FR DOC# 2015- 05530] (Labor only).
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor. *Programs and Activities Authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act;* (Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). Pages 20967-20987 [FR DOC# 2015-5540] (Education only).
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor. *State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program; State Supported Employment Services Program; Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage;* Pages 21059-21146 [FR DOC# 2015-05538] (Education only).
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) with the Departments of Education and Labor. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Miscellaneous Program Changes;* Pages 20988-21058 [FR DOC# 2015-05535] (Education only).

Table 3.

2011, 2012 & 2013 RSA Federal Indicators

State	2011							2012							2013						
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	Total Passed	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	Total Passed	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	Total Passed
Alabama		1	1	1		1	4	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5
Alaska	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6		1	1	1	1	1	5
American Samoa		1		1	1	1	4	1	1		1	1	1	5	1	1		1	1	1	5
Arizona			1	1		1	3	1		1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1		1	4
Arkansas			1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
California	1		1	1		1	4		1	1	1		1	4	1		1	1		1	4
Colorado	1		1	1			3	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5
Connecticut	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5
Delaware	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5
District of Columbia	1		1	1		1	4			1	1		1	3	1	1	1	1		1	5
Florida	1		1	1	1		4	1		1	1			3	1		1	1		1	4
Georgia	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5			1	1		1	3
Guam	1			1	1	1	4		1	1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1	1	1	5
Hawaii			1	1	1	1	4			1	1	1	1	4	1		1	1	1	1	5
Idaho	1	1	1	1	1	1	6			1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Illinois			1	1		1	3	1		1	1		1	4	1		1	1		1	4
Indiana	1		1	1	1		4	1	1	1	1	1		5		1	1	1	1		4
Iowa		1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Kansas	1		1	1		1	4			1	1		1	3	1		1	1		1	4
Kentucky	1	1	1	1	1	1	6		1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Louisiana			1	1	1	1	4			1	1	1	1	4	1		1	1	1	1	5
Maine	1		1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1	1	1	5

Table 3 (cont'd)

State	2011						Total Passed	2012						Total Passed	2013						Total Passed
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	
Maryland	1		1	1		1	4	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5
Massachusetts	1		1	1		1	4	1		1	1			3	1	1	1	1		1	5
Michigan	1		1	1	1	1	5			1	1	1	1	4			1	1	1	1	4
Minnesota	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5
Mississippi	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Missouri	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5		1	1	1		1	4
Montana	1		1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1	1		4	1		1	1	1	1	5
Nebraska	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Nevada	1		1	1	1	1	5			1	1	1	1	4			1	1	1	1	4
New Hampshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
New Jersey	1		1	1		1	4			1	1		1	3	1	1	1	1		1	5
New Mexico			1	1	1		3			1	1	1	1	4	1		1	1	1	1	5
New York	1		1	1		1	4			1	1		1	3	1	1	1	1		1	5
North Carolina	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5			1	1		1	3
North Dakota		1	1	1	1	1	5		1	1	1	1	1	5			1	1	1	1	4
Northern Marianas	1	1			1		3		1		1	1		3	1	1			1		3
Ohio			1	1	1	1	4	1		1	1		1	4	1		1	1		1	4
Oklahoma	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1		1	1	1	1	5		1	1	1	1	1	5
Oregon	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Pennsylvania	1		1	1	1		4	1		1	1	1	1	5	1		1	1		1	4
Rhode Island	1	1	1	1		1	5			1	1		1	3	1	1	1	1		1	5
South Carolina		1	1	1	1	1	5		1	1	1	1	1	5		1	1	1	1	1	5
South Dakota	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Tennessee	1		1	1		1	4	1		1	1		1	4	1	1	1	1		1	5
Texas	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5	1	1	1	1		1	5

Table 3 (cont'd)

State	2011						Total Passed	2012						Total Passed	2013						Total Passed
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6		1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	
Utah	1	1	1	1	1	1	6		1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Vermont	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5
Virgin Islands	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5		1	1	1	1		4
Virginia	1		1	1		1	4			1	1		1	3	1		1	1		1	4
Washington	1		1	1		1	4	1		1	1		1	4	1	1	1	1		1	5
West Virginia	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1		5	1	1	1	1	1		5
Wisconsin	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1		1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Wyoming	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1		1	1	1	1	5

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Anderson, C. A., Leahy, M. J., Del Valle, R., Sherman, S., & Tansey, T. N. (2014). Methodological application of multiple case study design using modified consensual qualitative research (CQR) analysis to identify best practices and organizational factors in the public rehabilitation program. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 87-98. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140709

Atkinson, D. E. (1997, November). Rehabilitation management and leadership competencies. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *41*(4), 249-261.

Atkinson, D. E., & Bitter, J. A. (1997, November). A curriculum model for the development of rehabilitation managers and leaders. *The Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *21*(4), 285-291.

Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership: good, better, best. *Organizational Dynamics*, *13*(3), 26-40.

Bezyak, J. L., Ososkie, J. N., Trice, A. L., & Yeager, P. (2010, winter). The importance of counseling supervision in the professional development of public rehabilitation counselors. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, *41*(4), 30-35.

Bitter, J. A., & Gay, D. A. (Eds.). (1997). Special issue on rehabilitation leadership development [Special issue]. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *21*(4).

Brown, A. (1992). Organizational culture: The key to effective leadership and organizational development. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *13*(13, 2), 3-6.

Cameron, K., & Quinn, R. (1999). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture based on the competing values framework*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Cameron, K., & Quinn, R. E. (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Chi, H., Lan, C., & Dorjgotov, B. (2012). The moderating effect of transformational leadership on knowledge management and organizational effectiveness. *Social Behavior and Personality, 40*(6), 1015-1024.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. (2013). *Investing in America* [Press release]. Rockville, Maryland: CSAVR.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Daniels, R. P. (1997, November). Rehabilitation leadership in the information age. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *21*(4), 243-247.

De Long, D., & Fahey, L. (2000). Diagnosing cultural barriers to knowledge management. *Academy of Management Executive*, *14*(4), 113-127.

Del Valle, R., Leahy, M. J., Sherman, S., Anderson, C. A., Tansey, T., & Schoen, B. (2014). Promising best practices that lead to employment in vocational rehabilitation: Findings from a four-state multiple case study. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 99-113. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140708

Dennison, D. R., Hooijberg, R., & Quinn, R. E. (1995). Paradox and performance: Toward a theory of behavioral complexity in managerial leadership. *Organization Science*, *6(*5), 524-540.

Dorrer, J. (2001, July). Workforce development program consolidation and service integration. *Switzer Seminar Series- Emerging Workforce Issues: W.I.A., Ticket to Work, and Partnerships*, 17-29.

Ford, L. H. (1997, November). Measuring rehabilitation management and leadership competencies. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *21*(4), 263-272.

Giberson, T. R., Resick, C. J., Dickson, M. W., Mitchelson, J. K., Randall, K. R., & Clark, M. A. (2009). Leadership and organizational culture: Linking CEO characteristics to cultural values. *Business Psychology*, *24*, 123-137.

Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers, an introduction* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Golden, T. P., Bruyere, S. M., Karpur, A., Nazarov, Z., & VanLooy, S. (2012). Workforce development policy: Unrealized potential for Americans with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Education*, *26*(1), 55-18.

Harkin, T. (2012, July). *Unfinished business: Making employment of people with disabilities a national priority*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Henry, G. T. (1990). *Practical sampling*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Herbert, J. T. (2004). Analysis of clinical supervision practices as documented in rehabilitation counseling syllabi and fieldwork manuals. *Rehabilitation Education*, *18*(1), 13-33.

Herbert, J. T., & Trusty, J. (2006, winter). Clinical supervision practices and satisfaction within the public vocational rehabilitation program. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, *49*(2), 66-80.

Hooijberg, R. (1996). A multidirectional approach towards leadership: An extension of the concept of behavioral complexity. *Human Relations*, *49* (7), 917-947.

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues. (2005). *Leading and managing change in public vocational rehabilitation* (31st ed.). Hot Springs, AR: University of Arkansas Currents.

Latta, J. (1981, May). Toward a more effective management philosophy. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *5*(2), 51-57.

Leahy, M. J., Chan, F., & Lui, J. (2014). Evidence-based best practices in the public vocational rehabilitation program that lead to employment outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 83-86. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140704

Leahy, M. J., Chan, F., Lui, J., Rosenthal, D., Tansey, T., Wehman, P., ... Menz, F. E. (2014). An analysis of evidence-based practices in the public vocational rehabilitation: Gaps, future directions, and recommended steps to move forward. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 147-163.

Leahy, M. J., Muenzen, P., Saunders, J. L., & Strauser, D. (2009). Essential knowledge domains underlying effective rehabilitation counseling practice. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, *52*(2), 95-106.

Leahy, M. J., Thielsen, V. A., Millington, M. J., Austin, B., & Fleming, A. (2009). Quality assurance and program evaluation: Terms, models and applications in rehabilitation administration. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *33*(2), 69-82.

Lincoln, S. (2010). From the individual to the world: How the competing values framework can help organizations improve global strategic performance. *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, *4*(1), 3-9.

Lui, J., Anderson, C. A., Matthews, P., Nierenhausen, E., & Schlegelmilch, A. (2014). Knowledge translation strategies to improve the resources for rehabilitation counselors to employ best practices in the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 137-145. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140706

McFarlane, F. R., Schroeder, F. K., & Enriquez, M. (2014). *How should we shape future public policies and services with people with disabilities?* San Diego, CA: Interwork Institute.

McFarlane, F. R., Schroeder, F. K., Enriquez, M., & Dew, D. (2011). *Journal of Rehabilitation*, *77*(4), 4-12.

McMahon, B. T., & Chan, F. (2011). Current and future challenges in vocational rehabilitation. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *35*, 189-191.

Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformational learning. *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Millington, M. J., & Schultz, J. C. (2009). The challenge of organizational culture in quality assurance implementation. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *33*(2), 121-129.

O'Brien, M., & Graham, M. (2009, January). Rehabilitation counseling in the state or federal program, Is there a future? *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, *52*(2), 124-128.

Packard, T. (2009). Leadership and performance in human services organizations. In R. J. Patti (Ed.), *The handbook of human services management* (pp. 143-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Patterson, J. B., Bruyere, S., Szymanski, E. M., & Jenkins, W. (Eds.). (2005). Philosophical, historical, and legislative aspects of the rehabilitation counseling profession. *Rehabilitation Counseling: Basics and Beyond*.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pruett, S. R., Swett, E. A., Chan, F., & Lee, D. K. (2008, April-June). Empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, *74*, 56-63.

Quinn, R. E. (1984). Applying the competing values approach to leadership: Towards an integrative framework. In J. G. Hunt, D. M. Hosking, C. A. Schriesheim, & R. Stewart (Eds.). *Leaders and managers: International perspectives on managerial behavior and leadership* (pp. 10-27). New York, NY: Pergamon Press.

Quinn, R. E., & Rohrbaugh, J. (1983). A spatial model of effectiveness criteria: Towards a competing values approach to organizational analysis. *Management Science*, *29*(3), 363-377.

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics. (2013). *2013 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium*. West Orange, NJ: National Institute on Disability and Related Research.

Rehabilitation Services Administration. (1990, Summer). The Americans with disabilities act of 1990. *American Rehabilitation*, 2-9.

Rijal, S. (2010). Leadership style and organizational culture in learning organization: A comparative study. *International Journal of Management and Information Systems*, *14*(14, 5), 119-127.

Rubin, S. E., & Roessler, R. T. (2008). *Foundations of the vocational rehabilitation process* (6th ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Rusalem, H., & Malikin, D. (1976). *Contemporary vocational rehabilitation*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Saleh, M. A. (1991, November). Changes and challenges: The quest for leadership in rehabilitation for the 21st century. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, 211-213.

Sanz-Valle, R., Naranjo-Valencia, J. C., Jimenez-Jimenez, D., & Perez-Caballero, L. (2011). Linking organizational learning with technical innovation and organizational culture. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *15*(6), 997-1015.

Schein, E. H. (1984). Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture. *Sloan Management Review*, 3-16.

Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. H. (1993). On dialogue, culture, and organizational learning. *Organizational Dynamics*, *22*, 40-51.

Schein, E. H. (1997). Organizational culture and leadership. Retrieved from http://www.tnellen.com/ted/tc/schein.html

Schraeder, M., Tears, R. S., & Jordan, M. H. (2005). Organizational culture in public sector organizations. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, *26*(5/6), 492-502.

Schroeder, F. (2014, September 4). WIOA-section by section [online]. Retrieved from NCSAB.org

Schroeder, F. (2014). WIOA analysis [Electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from NCSAB.org

Schultz, J. C. (2007). Addressing national concerns through supervision: The role of the rehabilitation agency supervisor. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, *38*(4), 11-18.

Schultz, J. C. (2008, spring). The tripartite model of supervision for rehabilitation counselors. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, *39*(1), 36-41.

Senge, P. (1994). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

Senge, P. M., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R. B., & Smith, B. J. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Sessa, V. I., & London, M. (2006). *Continuous learning: Individual, group, and organizational perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Shahzad, F., Luqman, R. A., Khan, A. R., & Shabbir, L. (2012). Impact of organizational culture on organizational performance: An overview. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, *3*(9), 975-985.

Shaw, K. J. (1997, November). Future directions for rehabilitation leadership. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, *21*(4), 293-298.

Shaw, L. R., Leahy, M. J., Chan, F., & Catalano, D. (2006). Contemporary issues facing rehabilitation counseling: A Delphi study of the perspectives of leaders of the discipline. *Rehabilitation Education*, *20*, 163-178.

Sherman, S. G., Leahy, M. J., Del Valle, R., Anderson, C. A., Tansey, T. N., & Lui, K. (2014). Organizational and cultural factors that promote creative best practices in the public rehabilitation program: Findings from a four-state multiple case study. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 115-125. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140710

Simon, S. E. (1991, November). Training rehabilitation administrators. *Journal of Rehabilitation Administration*, 209-210.

Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F., & Patterson, K. (2004). Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, *25*(3/4), 349-361.

Tansey, T. N., Bezyak, J., Chan, F., Leahy, M. J., & Lui, J. (2014). Social-cognitive predictors of readiness to use evidence-based practice: A survey of state vocational rehabilitation counselors. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *41*(2), 127-136. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JVR-140705

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Technical Assistance Circular RSA-TAC-15-01, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration. (2015).

Tuft, K. A. (2012). *A research study of transformational leadership comparing leadership styles of the principal* (Doctoral dissertation). http://www.duq.edu/documents/education/_pdf/DEFL/dissertation/20120309-luft.pdf

Warrick, D. D. (2011). The urgent need for skilled transformational leaders: Integrating transformational leadership and organization development. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, *8*(5), 11-26.

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, H.R. Res. 803, 113-2 Cong., U.S. Government Printing Office 1 (2014) (enacted).

Wright, G. N. (1980). *Total Rehabilitation*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Yang, F., Wu, M., Chang, C., & Chien, Y. (2011). Elucidating the relationships among transformational leadership, job satisfaction, commitment foci and commitment bases in the public sector. *Public Personnel Management*, *40*(3), 265-277. http://dx.doi.org/

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.