



CARF
Survey Report
for
Stout Vocational
Rehabilitation Institute

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Organization

Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI)
221 Tenth Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751

Organizational Leadership

Allen J. Noll, Ed.S., Director of Development
John Lui, Executive Director

Survey Dates

February 2-4, 2009

Survey Team

Lynn M. Noren, Administrative Surveyor
Rodney N. Pederson, Program Surveyor

Programs/Services Surveyed

Community Services: Assistive Technology Supports and Services
Community Services: Comprehensive Benefits Planning

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training
Employment Services: Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services

Previous Survey

April 24-25, 2006
Three-Year Accreditation



Survey Outcome

Three-Year Accreditation
Expiration: March 2012

SURVEY SUMMARY

Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) has strengths in many areas.

- SVRI has strong leadership, led by its executive director and an experienced management team with good collaboration with university leadership. Staff members at all levels are committed to the mission and goals of the organization and are active in professional efforts at the state and federal level to support ongoing service and policy development. The organization has a long history of stability, serving individuals with disabilities since 1967.
- The staff team at SVRI is commended for establishing and maintaining partnerships with community organizations, university partners, and other agencies throughout the United States and internationally. This emphasis brings in a broader perspective to the team and its programs. Collaborative efforts are in evidence at all levels within the organization, and the resources gained in terms of financial support, relationships, and knowledge are substantial.
- The staff team at SVRI is excellent. Many team members have been part of the organization for many years lending stability and providing newer employees with historical perspective pertaining to the growth and challenges of the organization. Program managers are talented and demonstrate a vision and commitment to optimizing the quality of life for the persons served.
- Staff members have opportunities for professional growth and development within their positions. The management style promotes creativity and ongoing service development.
- The organization is committed to improving campus accessibility beyond the scope of services. SVRI is complimented for its efforts to increase accessibility campuswide by providing assistance to students and faculty who become injured or who require short-term use of assistive devices from the organization's assistive technology laboratory. These efforts provide excellent marketing of the services of SVRI to a broader base on campus.
- The building that houses SVRI is impressive and has significant curb appeal. Once inside, visitors find neat, clean, and well-maintained labs, classrooms, and offices. Ongoing remodeling efforts have resulted in efficient workspace and created a modern environment that gives the impression that something important is occurring within the facility.
- The genuine compassion demonstrated by the administration and the dedication of staff members constitute a high level of commitment that has created an atmosphere of mutual respect that promotes the dignity of the persons served.
- Staff members reside in all service delivery areas and represent a true cross section of the communities served. Staff members are immersed in the web of community life, further advancing the organization's vision for community inclusion and integration.
- The programs have a long history of involving persons served and other stakeholders in program planning and goal establishment. This contributes to stakeholder satisfaction, creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, and facilitates open communication at all levels.

- The SVRI program has a well-deserved reputation among funding sources and other stakeholders for the provision of quality services to the greater Menomonic area and the surrounding regions. This is reflected in the many tributes paid to the organization and its staff members by the communities it serves. Strong and enduring partnerships have been established with referral and funding sources.
- Personnel at all levels are open to feedback and use it constructively. They are responsive to accommodating individuals who are challenging to serve and whom other providers are reluctant to serve.
- The organization's employment services employs dedicated and enthusiastic professional staff members who are responsive to the needs of the persons served, and there is a noticeable commitment to improving the quality of the lives of persons served and assisting them in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment. Placement counselors do an outstanding job of postdischarge follow-up and advocacy for persons served who have obtained community employment. The organization appears to be committed to ensuring that persons served have as smooth a transition as possible into life in the community.

In the following area Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.

- SVRI has developed an intensive evaluation program that is unique and provides highly individualized and extremely creative evaluation experiences to persons with complex needs. This innovative service delivery strategy combines vocational evaluation techniques and assistive technology to determine creative vocational options when options seem limited or nonexistent. This unique approach allows individuals experiencing difficulties performing standardized assessment tasks/activities to obtain optimal performance through the use of assistive technology and accommodations to enhance performance, increase independence, and provide a true evaluation of the individual's abilities. The program offers on-campus residence, and attendants and staff can assist in arranging attendant and nursing care when requested.

Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in this report. Consultation given does not indicate nonconformance to standards but is offered as a suggestion for further quality improvement.

On balance, SVRI provides high quality services that benefit the persons participating in the organization's programs. In addition, the organization has a long history of leadership in the field of vocational rehabilitation and a commitment to developing quality professional education programs as well. The organization is encouraged to address the areas noted for improvement in this report and to continue using the CARF standards to ensure that the services provided are of the highest quality. Although there are areas for improvement in relation to the standards, there is evidence of the willingness and ability to correct the areas of nonconformance stated within the report.

Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The administration and staff are complimented for the positive efforts they have made to provide quality services for persons who have disabilities. The leadership and staff members are encouraged to use this report and the standards as a tool to guide service delivery and improve administrative and business practices.

SECTION 1. ASPIRE TO EXCELLENCE®

A. Leadership

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations identify leadership that embraces the values of accountability and responsibility to the individual organization's stated mission. The leadership demonstrates corporate social responsibility.

Key Areas Addressed

- Leadership structure
 - Leadership guidance
 - Commitment to diversity
 - Corporate responsibility
 - Corporate compliance
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- SVRI has developed its own code of ethics to supplement the ethical codes of the university. It is suggested that procedures be added to the code to describe how allegations of violations will be handled and procedures for the education of personnel and other stakeholders regarding the ethical code of conduct, similar to what has been developed in the university's policy.
-

C. Strategic Integrated Planning

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations establish a foundation for success through strategic planning focused on taking advantage of strengths and opportunities and addressing weaknesses and threats.

Key Areas Addressed

- Strategic planning considers stakeholder expectation and environmental impacts
 - Written strategic plan sets goals
 - Plan is implemented, shared, and kept relevant
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- SVRI leadership has developed an annual business plan detailing its goals for the year. The current plan goals are written very briefly and are not descriptive of the specific actions to be taken for each identified goal. It is suggested that the planning process be expanded to include specific actions to be taken and perhaps specified details for each program as it relates to the defined goals. Expanded information could assist programs in ensuring that they are on track with organizational goals. Furthermore, as performance outcomes measures are developed for the programs, they could be aligned with this plan. Annual updates could reference progress achieved in the previous year.
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D. Input from Persons Served and Other Stakeholders

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations continually focus on the expectations of the persons served and other stakeholders. The standards in this subsection direct the organization's focus to soliciting, collecting, analyzing, and using input from all stakeholders to create services that meet or exceed the expectations of the persons served, the community, and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Ongoing collection of information from a variety of sources
 - Analysis and integration into business practices
 - Leadership response to information collected
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

E. Legal Requirements

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations comply with all the legal and regulatory requirements of federal, state, provincial, county, and city entities.

Key Areas Addressed

- Compliance with all legal/regulatory requirements
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Recommendations

E.2.a. through E.2.d.

It is recommended that SVRI develop and implement written procedures to guide personnel in responding to subpoenas, search warrants, investigations, and other legal action. A memo was developed in 2006 that could serve to guide the development of the procedures.

F. Financial Planning and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations strive to be financially responsible and solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports their mission, values, and annual performance objectives. Fiscal practices adhere to established accounting principles and business practices. Fiscal management covers daily operational cost management and incorporates plans for long-term solvency.

Key Areas Addressed

- Budget(s) prepared, shared, and reflective of strategic planning
 - Financial results reported/compared to budgeted performance
 - Organization review
 - Fiscal policies and procedures
 - Review of service billing records and fee structure
 - Financial review/audit
 - Safeguarding funds of persons served
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

G. Risk Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations engage in a coordinated set of activities designed to control threats to its people, property, income, goodwill, and ability to accomplish goals.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written risk management plan
 - Adequate insurance coverage
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Consultation

- The university has a department that reviews risks associated with the high level operations of the university, including its insurance coverage. It is suggested that the organization assess potential risks in the administration of its services and develop planning efforts that are specific to its operations.
-

H. Health and Safety

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations maintain healthy, safe, and clean environments that support quality services and minimize risk of harm to persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Inspections
- Emergency procedures
- Access to emergency first-aid
- Competency of personnel in safety procedures
- Reporting/reviewing critical incidents
- Infection control

Recommendations

H.7.a. through H.7.c.

SVRI has procedures in place for responding to individual types of incidents/emergencies, such as the use and possession of weapons on campus, physical injuries and accidents, and vehicular accidents. Although there has been training for staff regarding responding to incidents, there is no comprehensive written procedure for prevention, reporting, and remedial action of critical incidents. It is recommended that comprehensive incident reporting procedures be developed that describe the prevention, reporting, and remedial actions to be taken regarding incidents.

H.8.a.

H.8.b.(2)

Reports of incidents are discussed at monthly safety committee meetings chaired by the leadership of SVRI, and some actions to be taken are noted. It is recommended that additional written analysis of critical incidents be conducted at least annually to analyze trends and plan for actions to be taken to reduce incidents, the results of performance improvement plans, necessary education and training of personnel, prevention of recurrence, and responding to internal and external reporting requirements. One way to accomplish this could be to add a follow-up section to the monthly meeting minutes to guide the note taker to add information regarding issues raised in the previous month.

H.13.a. through H.13.e.

SVRI has emergency procedures for a range of emergencies. Currently, tests of fire and severe weather procedures are conducted at least annually. It is recommended that tests of all emergency procedures be conducted at least once annually on all shifts. Tests can include actual or simulated physical evacuations when included in the procedures. Tests of emergency procedures should be analyzed in writing for performance improvement and result in improvement or affirmation of current practice.

I. Human Resources

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources. It should be evident that personnel are involved and engaged in the success of the organization and the persons they serve.

Key Areas Addressed

- Adequate staffing
- Verification of background/credentials
- Recruitment/retention efforts

- Personnel skills/characteristics
 - Annual review of job description/performance
 - Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

J. Technology

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations plan for the use of technology to support and advance effective and efficient service and business practices.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written technology and system plan
-

Recommendations

J.1.a.(1) through J.1.b.

The university is currently in the process of developing a technology and systems plan. The plan is expected to be completed by Fall 2009. SVRI staff members are supported in their information technology needs through the expertise of their assistive technology manager as well as a student intern assigned to assist them with technology challenges. However, there is no technology and systems plan currently in place. It is recommended that SVRI ensure that its technology and systems plan includes hardware, software, security, confidentiality, backup policies, assistive technology, disaster recovery preparedness, and virus protection. The plan should be used to support information management and performance improvement activities. The organization could benefit from aligning its technology and systems plan with the university's plan once developed.

K. Rights of Persons Served

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations protect and promote the rights of the persons served. This commitment guides the delivery of services and ongoing interactions with the persons served.

Key Areas Addressed

- Communication of rights
 - Policies that promote rights
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

L. Accessibility

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations promote accessibility and the removal of barriers for the persons served and other stakeholders.

Key Areas Addressed

- Written accessibility plan(s)
 - Status report regarding removal of identified barriers
 - Requests for reasonable accommodations
-

Recommendations

L.2.a.(8)

L.2.b.

L.2.c.

It is recommended that the accessibility policy and plan be expanded to include identification of any barriers related to community integration for persons served and time lines and actions for the removal of identified barriers.

L.3.a. through L.3.c.(2)

A written accessibility status report regarding the removal of barriers should be completed annually, including progress made in the removal of identified barriers and areas for improvement.

Consultation

- SVRI seeks satisfaction information from persons served and other stakeholders. One way to secure information regarding access to services could be to add a question to its satisfaction surveys inquiring about any barriers noted regarding the organization and its services. This feedback could provide additional insight into the identification of barriers.
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M. Information Measurement and Management

Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations are committed to continually improving their organizations and service delivery to the persons served. Data are collected, and information is used to manage and improve service delivery.

Key Areas Addressed

- Information collection, use, and management
 - Setting and measuring performance indicators
-

Recommendations

M.4.c.(1) through M.4.c.(3)

M.4.d.(1) through M.4.d.(4)

SVRI produces an annual quality assurance data report, which analyzes the demographic characteristics of persons served in its programs. Furthermore, an analysis is completed of satisfaction information from persons served and other stakeholders. Within the industry grant project, which recently ended, specific measures were developed and reported on relating to efficiency, effectiveness, and service access. It is recommended that performance measures be developed for other programs seeking accreditation that indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of services and service access. For each indicator, the measure should address to whom it will be applied; how the data will be collected; a performance goal based on an industry benchmark, organizational history, or a target established by the organization or other stakeholder(s); and any extenuating/influencing factors that should be considered when analyzing performance. SVRI has recently updated its database to track client characteristics. The new system will provide improved access to information, especially for clients who are served in multiple program areas. It is suggested that the database be modified to add data collection of performance indicators when they are established. For example, indicators could include tracking the average number of weeks to job placement or the amount of time from referral to start in vocational evaluation. Using the database could improve the ease of tracking information as the performance measurement system is developed.

N. Performance Improvement

Principle Statement

The dynamic nature of continuous improvement in a CARF-accredited organization sets it apart from other organizations providing similar services. CARF-accredited organizations share and provide the persons served and other interested stakeholders with ongoing information about their actual performance as a business entity and their ability to achieve optimal outcomes for the persons served through their programs and services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Proactive performance improvement
 - Performance information shared with all stakeholders
-

Recommendations

N.1.b.(2)(a) through N.1.b.(2)(c)

As performance measurement information is expanded to include measures of effectiveness, efficiency, and service access for programs, it is recommended that SVRI include this information in its annual quality assurance data report.

SECTION 2. QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

A. Individual-Centered Service Planning, Design, and Delivery

Principle Statement

Improvement of the quality of an individual's services requires a focus on the person and/or family served and their identified strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences. The organization's services are designed around the identified needs and desires of the persons served, are responsive to their expectations, and are relevant to their maximum participation in the environments of their choice.

The person served participates in decision making, directing, and planning that affects his or her life. Efforts to include the person served in the direction or delivery of those services are evident. The service environment reflects identified cultural needs, practices, and diversity. The person served is given information about the purposes of the organization.

Key Areas Addressed

- Services are person-centered and individualized
 - Persons are given information about the organization's purposes and ability to address desired outcomes
-

Recommendations

A.1.a.

A.1.b.

It is recommended that the institute expand its current policies and procedures for acceptance into services to identify the process and order of acceptance when a person is awaiting services and the position or entity responsible for making acceptance decisions.

A.9.f.

Coordinated service plans are highly individualized; however, there is no evidence indicating that cultural background information is routinely considered in plan formation. It is recommended that all individualized service plans be based on cultural backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the persons served.

Consultation

- The organization might consider prominently displaying wording on written policies, procedures, manuals, and handbooks that indicate that these documents are available in alternative formats.
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B. Records of the Persons Served

Principle Statement

The organization maintains complete records and treats all information related to persons served as confidential.

Key Areas Addressed

- Complete, confidential records are maintained
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

D. Employment Services Principle Standards

Principle Statement

The standards in this subsection assert basic principles that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of employment services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Goals of the persons served
- Personnel needs of local employers
- Community resources available
- Economic trends in the local employment sector

Recommendations

D.2.h.

Individual employment service plans contain no evidence indicating that cultural and language background information is routinely considered in plan formation. It is recommended that all individualized employment service plans be based on cultural and language backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the persons served.

F. Community Services Principle Standards

Principle Statement

The standards in this subsection assert basic principles that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of community services.

Key Areas Addressed

- Access to community resources and services
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 3. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Principle Statement

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment services provides individualized services to achieve identified employment outcomes. The array of services in this section may include:

- Identification of employment opportunities and resources in the local job market.
- Development of realistic employment goals.
- Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes.
- Identification of resources to achieve and maintain employment.
- Coordination of and referral to employment-related services.

The organization maintains its leadership role in the employment sector of the community by designing and continually improving its services based on input from the persons served and from employers in the local job market, and managing results of the organization's outcomes management system. The provision of quality employment services requires a continuous focus on the persons served and the personnel needs of employers in the organization's local job market.

D. Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services

Principle Statement

Comprehensive vocational evaluation services provide an individualized, timely, and systematic process by which a person seeking employment, in partnership with an evaluator, learns to identify viable vocational options and develop employment goals and objectives.

An accredited comprehensive vocational evaluation service is capable of examining a wide range of employment alternatives. The following techniques are used, as is appropriate to the person being assessed, to provide comprehensive vocational evaluation services:

- Pre-evaluation assessment of assistive technology needs.
- Assessment of functional/occupational performance in real or simulated environments
- Work samples
- Employment exploration model
- Psychometric testing
- Preference and interest inventories
- Personality testing
- Extensive personal interviews
- Other appropriate evaluation tests, depending on the individual
- Analysis of prior work experience and transferable skills

Key Areas Addressed

- Vocational options
- Various exploratory techniques used by qualified evaluators
- Employment goals

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

Exemplary Conformance

D.4.

SVRI has developed an intensive evaluation program that is unique and provides highly individualized and extremely creative evaluation experiences to persons with complex needs. This innovative service delivery strategy combines vocational evaluation techniques and assistive technology to determine creative vocational options when options seem limited or nonexistent. This unique approach allows individuals experiencing difficulties performing standardized assessment tasks/activities to obtain optimal performance through the use of assistive technology and accommodations to enhance performance, increase independence, and provide a true evaluation of the individual's abilities. The program offers on-campus residence, and attendants and staff can assist in arranging attendant and nursing care when requested.

Consultation

- Evaluators are encouraged to enforce the existing policy that requires referral sources to complete the referral questions section on the individual written evaluation plan document.
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H. Community Employment Services

Principle Statement

Job Development

Successful job development concurrently uses assessment information about the person seeking employment to target the types of jobs available from potential employers in the local labor market. Typical job development activities include reviewing local employment opportunities and developing potential employers/customers through direct and indirect promotional strategies.

Job-Site Training

Job-site training services vary according to the needs of the new employee and the complexity of the job. Training can include assisting the employee with performance on the new job task and helping the person to understand the job culture and industry practices and work behaviors expected by the employer. It may also include training the employer and coworkers to understand the training methods and accommodations needed by the worker.

Job Supports

Ongoing job support services are activities that are employment-related and needed to promote job adjustment and retention. These services are based on the individual needs of the new employee.

Key Areas Addressed

- Integrated employment choice
 - Integrated employment obtainment
 - Integrated employment retention
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

SECTION 4. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Principle Statement

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of community services assists the persons and/or families served in obtaining access to the resources and services of their choice. The persons and/or families served are included in their communities to the degree they desire. This may be accomplished by direct service provision or linkages to existing generic opportunities and natural supports in the community.

The organization obtains information from the persons and/or families served regarding resources and services they want or require that will meet their identified needs, and offers an array of services it arranges for or provides. The organization provides the persons and/or families served with information so that they may make informed choices and decisions.

The services and supports are changed as necessary to meet the identified needs of the persons and/or families served and other stakeholders. Service designs address identified individual, family, socioeconomic, and cultural needs.

Expected results from these services may include:

- Increased inclusion in community activities.
- Increased or maintained ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Increased self-direction, self-determination, self-reliance, and self-esteem.

A. Assistive Technology Supports and Services

Principle Statement

By providing an array of community assistive technology services, which may be specialized to a specific population, an organization assists the persons served in making informed decisions and choices to increase access to or participation in employment options, education, independent living, interdependence, and/or inclusion in the community. Services reflect the latest knowledge in the field.

Services and supports may include assisting persons served in the assessment, evaluation, selection, acquisition, use, support, design and fabrication, follow-along or follow-up, modification, or maintenance of an assistive technology device; providing or arranging for training; providing information about referrals for and observations and trials of assistive technology devices; and/or exploring alternative strategies. Training is an important component of services because assistive technology is often abandoned if persons have not been properly trained in its use.

Strategies for accommodation may include the use of assistive technology applications in:

- Communication
- Community living
- Environmental control
- Mobility, orientation, or destination training
- Education and training
- Activities of daily living/independent living
- Employment
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Meeting other needs as defined by the persons served

Assistive technology services may be provided by an organization as part of its service delivery program, by a department within an organization, or by an organization with the sole purpose of providing assistive technology services. Services are provided by personnel who practice only in their area(s) of competency.

Key Areas Addressed

- Informed decisions and choices about assistive technology devices
 - Increased independence and community inclusion
-

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

O. Comprehensive Benefits Planning

Principle Statement

A comprehensive benefits planning organization creates and continuously improves its services and staff competencies to enhance the economic standing and self-sufficiency of persons served. Through trained and professional benefits planning specialists, comprehensive individual and family benefits planning enhances lives, provides support in learning how to advocate for benefits, and provides support in learning how and when to access needed resources.

Benefits planning that is comprehensive assists individuals through collaboration and coordination with a wide range of potential resources and agencies. The following is not an exhaustive list, but suggests some examples of these:

- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) (SSA)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (SSA)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)
- Workers' Compensation
- Unemployment compensation
- Veterans Benefits
- Medicare (CMS) & Medicaid (CMS)
- Housing assistance
- Energy assistance
- Food stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Tax credits
- Transportation assistance
- Private insurance (short- and long-term disability policies)

Some examples of quality results desired by the different stakeholders of these services include:

- Access
 - Communication and learning styles are addressed.
 - Individual disability or employment challenges are met.
 - Service locations are accessible.
 - Benefits planning meetings use effective mediums such as face-to-face meetings, phone conferences, e-mail, and video conferencing.
- Effectiveness
 - Persons served are able to identify specific benefits applicable to their work and living situations.
 - Advocacy skills are developed for specific benefits issues.
 - Informed choices are made with regard to employment and benefits planning.
 - Self-sufficiency in personal resource management is achieved.
 - Skills for resource planning are achieved.
 - Enhanced economic well-being of the person served is achieved.
- Efficiency
 - The time from intake to referral is minimized.
 - A comprehensive and individualized plan is developed in minimal time.
 - Benefits planning reports are returned to referral authorities and persons served within designated times.
 - The caseload of benefits planning specialists is maintained at the level of “break-even” efficiency.
- Person Served Satisfaction
 - Persons served express satisfaction in:
 - The knowledge they gained about benefits and community resources.
 - The reduction of their fears regarding the potential loss of benefits.
 - Trust and confidence of the benefits planning process and its result.
 - The personal and employment choices made based on quality benefits information.

■ Stakeholder Satisfaction

- Family members and other stakeholders:
 - Gain knowledge to help with benefits management and return-to-work economic support strategies.
 - Express reduced fear of losing benefits.
 - Identify methods for “navigating the system” and connecting to resources.
 - View benefits as tools to help youths transitioning from school reach their employment and community living goals.

Key Areas Addressed

- Online information provided
 - Staff training and competency
 - Availability of information about community resources
 - Assistance with understanding budgeting and employment planning for managing benefits
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Recommendations

O.11.a.

It is recommended that comprehensive benefits planning expand the ongoing training provided to benefits planning specialists to include targeted training in the area of cultural diversity. This can enhance the capability of benefits planning specialists to ensure that service provision is responsive to each person’s cultural needs.

O.12.a.

Service planning provision should be responsive to each person’s cultural needs.

Consultation

- The organization employs extremely competent, knowledgeable, and articulate benefits planning specialists. It might be beneficial for SVRI to identify a variety of venues where benefit specialists can present, explain, and market the services offered through this wonderful program.
-