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End of Year Annual Performance Report, Year One

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY Research foundation

INTERWORK INSTITUTE

VRTAC-QM

END OF YEAR Annual Performance Report

YEAR ONE

# Executive Summary

The first year of the VRTAC-QM was exceptionally busy and productive. The demand for quality management TA and training in the program and performance and fiscal and resource areas has been significant. As of the end of the first year of the project, we achieved the following:

* Completion of four intensive technical assistance agreements (ITAAs) that include Delaware Blind, Kansas Combined, Montana Combined and Pennsylvania Combined;
* The Kansas and Pennsylvania ITAAs are collaborative efforts with the NTAC:C;
* In addition to the four strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses that resulted in the ITAAs above, completion of an additional four SWOTS that included Maryland Combined, Florida General, Washington Blind, and South Carolina General;
* Combined intensive and targeted TA that included 65 State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) or 83% of the total 78 agencies;
* A total of 358 targeted TA events;
* More than 3,406 individuals receiving at least targeted TA and training;
* More than 3,400 individuals accessing the 13 webinars we created;
* The creation of a website that has hundreds of resources and tools available for VR staff on quality management accessed by over 3,800 unique visitors;
* Completion of the initial comprehensive review of quality management strategies and practices for VR; and
* Multiple collaborative efforts with other TACs.

The VRTAC-QM continues to work closely with the VRTAC-QE and the NTACT:C in planning to work with other agencies. We communicate frequently with both centers and continue to coordinate and organize the technical assistance center collaborative (TACC) meetings that occur monthly.

There were two major projects that were delayed in Year One. These are the VR Wellness Check tool and the Management Concepts training. Both of these projects should be off the ground by the mid-point of Year Two.

The special projects are moving forward with identification of pilot sites. The Employment First Systems Change project is active in South Carolina and is targeting Montana and Colorado. The SARA pilot is at the beginning stages in Texas, Montana and Virginia Blind. The CRA projects are awaiting review of multiple questions posed to RSA that are in review by the OGC before they move forward with contacting SVRAs. In the meantime the NDI team is working with banks to obtain commitments to the effort.

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**Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for**

**Quality Management**

**End of Year Annual Performance Report**

Name of individual filling out form: Chaz Compton

Organization: SDSURF – Interwork Institute

Annual report period: (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)

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# Section A: Substantial progress toward completion of goals, objectives, and outputs

## Part 1: Program activities, outputs, and products

## Intensive TA agreement development and progress on activities, outputs, and outcomes:

All of the intensive TA agreements (ITAAs) developed with SVRAs are based on a logic model that drives the evaluation of the activities, outputs and outcomes. We developed a logic model for each of our focus areas that includes the most common activities, outputs and outcomes for each area. The logic models are living documents and can be modified, added to and changed as necessary. Below are the logic model activities, outputs and outcomes for each of our focus areas.

Table 1: Quality Fiscal and Resource Management Logic Model

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| Review, develop, and/or revise, as needed, policies and procedures for (insert VR fiscal topic). | Completed draft/revised policies and procedures recommendations for (insert VR fiscal topic) |
| Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, written internal controls necessary for (insert VR fiscal topic). | Completed draft/revised written internal controls recommendations for (insert VR fiscal topic). |
| Review and analyze the VR agency’s fiscal management and operations to assist leadership with development of an improvement plan for (insert VR fiscal topic). | Completed improvement plan for (insert VR fiscal topic). |
| Assist in developing strategies and response to requirements identified in the RSA Monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP). | Completed draft/revised CAP strategy and response recommendations. |
| Develop a work plan to execute an identified strategy identified in the CAP. | Completed work plan with action steps and timelines. |
| Assist VR Administration in identifying fiscal areas in need of improvement and training. | Completed plan with identified implementation needs and training. |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| Assist agency to develop and implement an internal fiscal monitoring process | The establishment of an internal monitoring process with areas of review identified and timelines for regular completion |
| Conduct training regarding *{insert topic, e.g., the fiscal requirements for managing the VR grant, D-RAAN, etc.}*. | The number of individuals that complete the training(s). |
| Provide TA and training to develop the VR agency’s capacity to correctly manage period of performance (*insert*). | The number of topics related to period of performance addressed in TA and training and the number of individuals that received the TA and training. |
| Review and analyze sources of VR agency’s non-federal share and its adherence to applicable match/MOE requirements and make recommendations for maximizing the Federal share. | Documented feedback on allowable match and recommendations for maximizing Federal share. |
| Review processes for fiscal reporting and make recommendations for improving accuracy, efficiency and/or automating. | Documented feedback and recommendations for fiscal reporting. |
| Review and analyze the VR agency’s indirect cost/cost allocation plan for correct utilization in collaboration with RSA. | RSA approved indirect cost/cost-allocation plan. |
| Review existing expenditures allocated to the Pre-ETS reserved funds and determine if they are allowable costs. | Documented feedback on allowable expenditures. |
| Assist the VR agency in the development of processes and internal controls for accurate financial reporting of Pre-ETS, including the additional costs that may be charged to the reserve consistent with the NOI. | Draft of written processes and internal controls provided to the VR agency. |
| **OUTCOMES**  **Short to Mid-Term**   * + - 1. The State will fully expend their 15% pre-employment transition services reserve every year.   *Measurement*: Reserve expenditures will be examined annually.   * + - 1. The internal fiscal monitoring process will demonstrate a reduction in errors in (identify area or areas) annually.   *Measurement*: The results from the internal fiscal monitoring will be evaluated against the prior monitoring to determine if improvement has been made in the identified areas.   * + - 1. There will be a reduction in fiscal findings resulting from the single state audit.   *Measurement*: The fiscal findings from the single state audit will be compared against the previous audit's fiscal findings to determine if there has been a reduction.   * + - 1. There will be an increase in knowledge of VR agency staff as a result of the training provided.   *Measurement*: A pre and post-test will be administered to determine the level of knowledge increase.   * + - 1. The VR agency will maximize its ability to draw down the Federal share within the capacity of its non-Federal share sources.   *Measurement*: The Federal share will be compared from one year to the next to determine if the agency has maximized its ability to draw down available Federal funds.  **Long-Term**  There will be a reduction in the corrective actions related to fiscal performance of the VR program.  *Measurement*: The results number of corrective actions related to the fiscal performance of the VR program will be measured against the prior monitoring report. | |

In the quality program and performance management logic model, we broke-up the activities, outputs and outcomes into two broad categories that include VR program and regulations and WIOA performance and accountability. Both of these logic models are presented below.

Table 2: VR Program and Regulations Logic Model

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| 1. Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, policies and procedures for [*insert VR topic/requirement* | 1. Completed draft/revised policies and procedures recommendations for [*insert VR topic* |
| 1. Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, written internal controls necessary for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Timely Eligibility and IPE Development, Service Provision*] | 1. Completed draft/revised internal controls and written procedures recommendations for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Timely Eligibility and IPE Development, Service Provision*] |
| 1. Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, performance evaluation standards for VR Counselors (and other staff as needed) reflecting agency and WIOA standards | 1. Completed draft/revised performance evaluation standards recommendations |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| 1. Assist VR leadership in the development of a program improvement plan for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Training and onboarding of staff, policy manual evaluation and amendments*] | 1. Completed plan for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Training and onboarding of staff, policy manual evaluation and amendments*] with identified implementation needs, required data, roles, and responsibilities, and other. |
| 1. Assist VR agency in responding to and developing strategies necessary to meet the requirements identified in the RSA Monitoring Corrective Action Plan (CAP) | 1. Completed draft/revised response and strategy recommendations |
| 1. Assist VR Administration in identifying areas needing improvement through use of agency data/analytics (e.g., RSA-911, case management system) | 1. Completed plan with identified implementation needs, required data, roles, and responsibilities, and other |
| 1. Analyze VR agency’s ability to accurately track and report VR requirements in the [*insert report – e.g., RSA-911, RSA-722, State Plan*] | 1. Completed assessment with identified implementation strategies and timelines necessary to accurately track and report VR requirements in the [*insert report – e.g., RSA-911, RSA-722, State Plan*] |
| 1. Assist VR agency’s data/case management system and program staff to develop/revise data collection processes for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Service provision, Pre-ETS*] | 1. Completed recommendations and/or implementation for data collection processes for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Service provision, Pre-ETS*] |
| 1. Assist VR agency in developing strategies for data analysis and data-informed decision-making for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Visual Analytics – Tableau, tracking reports*] | 1. Completed draft/revised strategies including data analysis and data-informed decision-making recommendations for [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., Visual Analytics – Tableau, tracking reports*] |
| 1. Staff training on [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., eligibility, IPE development, Law/Regulations and State connections*] | 1. The number of staff that receive training on [*insert VR topic/requirement – e.g., IPE development, Law/Regulations and State connections*] |
| 1. Conduct a staff training needs assessment, including a report with staff training needs identified for different job classifications. | 1. Completed staff training needs report. Template survey for use annually provided. |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| 1. Assist OVR to develop and implement a formal succession plan for use by the agency to sustain institutional knowledge and prepare future leaders of the organization, includes formal succession plan | 1. Completed draft succession plan. |
| 1. Assist agency to establish a method and policy for rate-setting and evaluating the performance of service providers | 1. Draft policy and procedure on rate-setting and evaluating performance of service providers completed. |
| **OUTCOMES**  **Short to Mid-Term**   1. SVRA successfully reports accurate and valid data related to *[insert goal – e.g., decreased errors in RSA-911 quarterly report, service provision]*.   *Measurement*: The results of the [*insert goal*] will be compared against the previous year’s actual numbers and/or rates.   1. Increase in the rate of consumers found eligible within 60 days from application 2. There will be an increase in experienced and qualified staff that are prepared to assume leadership roles in the agency.   **Long-Term**   1. SVRA will achieve increased outcomes at [*insert percentage – e.g., 5%, 10%*] related to [*insert goal – e.g., competitive integrated employment, wages at exit*].   *Measurement*: The results of the [*insert goal*] will be compared against the previous year’s actual numbers and/or rates.   1. SVRA will achieve program improvement in the area of [*insert goal – e.g., provision of services, regulation adherence, CAP*].   *Measurement*: The results of the [*insert goal*] will be compared against the previous year’s actual numbers and/or rates. | |

Table 3: WIOA Performance Accountability

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| 1. Analyze VR agency readiness and capacity to track and report data for (i.e., RSA-911 and supporting documentation) the WIOA Performance Indicators | 1. Completed assessment with identified implementation strategies and timelines necessary to accurately track and report the RSA-911 and supporting documentation data for the WIOA Performance Indicators |
| 1. Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, policies and procedures for the WIOA Performance Accountability System | 1. Completed draft/revised policies and procedures recommendations |
| 1. Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, written internal controls necessary for the WIOA Performance Accountability System | 1. Completed draft/revised internal controls and written procedures recommendations |
| 1. Assist VR Administration in identifying areas related to the WIOA Performance Indicators needing improvement through data analytics (e.g., RSA-911, case management system, targets, participant achievements) | 1. Completed plan with identified implementation needs, required data, roles, and responsibilities, and other |
| 1. Assist VR leadership in the development of a program improvement plan for [*insert WIOA Performance topic/requirement – e.g., increasing MSG, reporting post-exit data*] | 1. Completed plan for [*insert WIOA Performance topic/requirement – e.g., increasing MSG, reporting post-exit data*] with identified implementation needs, required data, roles, and responsibilities, and other |
| 1. Assist VR agency in responding to and developing strategies necessary to meet the WIOA Section 116 technical assistance requirements identified by RSA after a performance failure | 1. Completed draft/revised response and strategy recommendations |
| 1. Assist VR agency in developing strategies for data analysis and data-informed decision-making (visual analytics – Tableau, tracking reports, etc.) for meeting or exceeding WIOA performance established targets | 1. Completed draft/revised strategies including data analysis and data-informed decision-making recommendations |
| **ACTIVITIES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| 1. Assist VR agency’s data/case management system and program staff to develop/revise data collection processes for the WIOA Performance Indicators | 1. Completed recommendations and/or implementation for data collection processes for the WIOA Performance Indicators |
| 1. Staff training on [*insert topic/requirement – e.g., Education (CA/MSG), sanctions and negotiations*] of the WIOA Performance Accountability System | 1. The number of staff that receive training on [*insert topic/requirement – e.g., Education (CA/MSG), sanctions and negotiations*] |
| **OUTCOMES**  **Short to Mid-Term**   1. SVRA successfully reports accurate and valid data related to [*insert goal – e.g., credential attainment rate, employment rates*].   *Measurement*: The results of the [*insert goal*] will be compared against the previous year’s actual performance rates.  **Long-Term**   1. SVRA will successfully meet all WIOA established levels of performance.   *Measurement*: The results of each performance rate will be compared against the established targets on an annual basis.   1. SVRA will achieve program improvement in the area of [*insert goal – e.g., increased participants enrolled in education/training programs*].   *Measurement*: The results of the [*insert goal*] will be compared against the previous year’s actual numbers and/or rates. | |

The VRTAC-QM completed four intensive TA agreements (ITAAs) in the first year of the project. This total is one more than the three required by our cooperative agreement. The four State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) include Kansas Combined, Montana Combined, Delaware Blind and Pennsylvania Combined.

When the ITAAs are completed and signed, a work plan is developed and provided to the SVRA. The workplan details each of the activities in the ITAA and includes a progress bar that tracks the progress of completion for each activity, output and outcome. Our TA teams meet with each SVRA once a month to review progress in each of the activity and output areas. The work plan acts as a helpful tool to keep all of the stakeholders informed and on track to achieve the stated goals. The work plans for each of the SVRAs are attached to this report. Each of the agreements are detailed below.

**Kansas Combined**:

The VRTAC-QM completed the initial ITAA for Kansas Combined on March 26th after their SWOT and review of the draft. When the SWOT was completed for Kansas, there was not an indication that pre-employment transition services was an area of need for TA or training. However, shortly after the ITAA was developed, Kansas began requesting intervention for the NTACT:C and us to address the programmatic and fiscal areas of pre-employment transition services that they were dealing with. Consequently, we revised the ITAA to include multiple activities for the NTACT:C and added fiscal pre-ETS activities for us. The revised agreement was completed and signed by all parties on July 13, 2021. Table 4 contains a list of all of the activities and outputs for the Kansas ITAA, as well as the progress made in Year One in completing the activities and outputs. We will only be including this table as an example of how we track progress in the body of this report. The attached work plans contain all of this information and the program evaluation report will provide further detail.

Table 4

*Kansas ITAA Activities, Outputs and Progress*

| **Activity** | **Percent Complete** | **Output** | **Percent Complete** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conduct a staff training needs assessment | 100% | Completed needs assessment report with staff training needs identified for different job classifications | 100% |
| Conduct staff training on eligibility determinations and other areas as requested by KRS | 50% | Number of staff that complete training for each of the identified topic areas | 50% |
| Review, revise and/or develop policies and procedures related to case processing and service delivery | 10% | Completed review and draft/revisions of policies and procedure with recommendations in identified areas | 10% |
| Review and revise/develop internal controls related to case processing and service delivery as needed | 10% | Completed review and draft/revisions of internal controls | 10% |
| Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, performance evaluation standards for VR Counselors (and other staff as needed) reflecting agency and WIOA standards | 75% | Completed draft/revised performance evaluation standards recommendations | 50% |
| Analyze VR agency readiness and capacity to track and report data for (i.e., RSA-911 and supporting documentation) the WIOA Performance Indicators | 75% | Completed assessment with identified implementation strategies and timelines necessary to accurately track and report the RSA-911 and supporting documentation data for the WIOA Performance Indicators | 75% |
| Review, develop and/or revise, as needed, written internal controls necessary for the WIOA Performance Accountability System | 25% | Completed draft/revised internal controls and written procedures recommendations | 10% |
| Assist VR agency in developing strategies for data analysis and data-informed decision-making (visual analytics – Tableau, tracking reports, etc.) for meeting or exceeding WIOA performance established targets | 25% | Completed draft/revised strategies including data analysis and data-informed decision-making recommendations | 10% |
| Assist agency to establish a method and policy for rate-setting and evaluating the performance of service providers | 0% | Completed draft/revised policies for rate setting and recommendations for evaluating the performance of service providers | 0% |
| Assist VR agency in reviewing/revising the State Interagency Agreement (MOU) to incorporate required components consistent with applicable Federal Regulations under IDEA and The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA; and connect with Kansas Dept of Education (KSDE) for implementation of this agreement | 50% | Completed State Interagency Agreement (MOU) | 50% |
| Assist VR Agency, in partnership with KSDE, in developing a Partnership Planning Guide to support local level implementation of the State Interagency Agreement | 25% | Completed/finalized local level guide | 10% |
| Assist VR agency in implementing the flexibilities from the NOI. | 50% | Policies, procedures, and/or written processes and guidance inclusive of the additional services that can be charged to the reserve, tracked in the RSA-911, and costs reflected on the RSA-17 | 25% |
| Analyze VR agency’s ability to accurately track and report VR requirements for students with disabilities and pre-employment transition services | 75% | Completed assessment with identified implementation strategies and timelines necessary to accurately track and report VR requirements for students with disabilities and pre-employment transition services | 75% |
| Assist VR agency in developing and/or revising provider agreements and /or written processes /guidance for service delivery of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities | 25% | Completed draft/revised provider agreements and/or written processes/guidance for service provision to include Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), Project Search, Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) | 10% |
| Staff training on the allocation of allowable costs (including tracking and reporting), and strategies for effective implementation of pre-employment transition services and transition services for students with disabilities | 10% | The number of staff that receive training | 10% |

**Delaware Blind**:

The ITAA for Delaware Blind was completed and signed on May 11, 2021. The VRTAC-QM began working with DDVI intensely shortly after the project was funded upon request from RSA. The agency had recently been monitored and they had significant findings in the financial management of the program portion of the monitoring. All of the activities, outputs and outcomes are related to the fiscal management area. Their work plan is embedded below and can be accessed by double-clicking on the icon. The work plan is also attached.



The work with DVI has been very intensive and this is reflected in the number of activities that have been completed. There are 15 activities associated with helping DVI respond to their corrective actions. There are five of these activities that are 100% completed and four at 50% complete. There are eight fiscal activities, and four of them are 100% complete, one is 90% complete and three are 10% complete. In addition there is one training activity that is 100% complete.

**Montana Combined**:

The ITAA for Montana was completed on May 20, 2021. The agency transitioned to the WellSky case management system in July, which slowed down full implementation of many activities in the ITAA. The agency has taken a considered and deliberate approach to the activities in the ITAA, ensuring that they have the staff time and effort to give to the work. This is helpful for all stakeholders as they do no begin work until they are ready to fully commit. The current work plan with progress is embedded below and attached.



**Pennsylvania Combined:**

The ITAA for Pennsylvania Combined was completed on June 28, 2021. This agreement is a collaboration with the NTACT:C, and may become one with the VRTAC-QE eventually. There are many activities included in this ITAA. Focus areas include training in the VR process, WIOA performance accountability reporting and data analysis, policies and procedures review development and revision and pre-employment transition services.

The current work plan for the agency is embedded below and attached to this report.



## SWOT assessment tools development and assessments conducted

The team at VRTAC-QM worked closely with RSA to develop the SWOT analysis tool at the beginning of the project. The final version of the tool is very comprehensive and would take a considerable amount of time to work through with an agency if we started at the beginning and worked all the way through. The common way of conducting a SWOT to date has been to review the areas with the agency and determine what areas they would like to review once we have worked through their perspective on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

In addition to the four SWOTs conducted for the four intensive TA states, we conducted four other SOWTs in Year One, for a total of eight. The SWOTs were:

* + - 1. Maryland Combined on August 18, 2021;
      2. Florida General on August 27, 2021;
      3. Washington Blind on August 30, 2021; and
      4. South Carolina General on September 15, 2021.

All of the above SWOTs are likely to lead to intensive agreements, with all but South Carolina General likely to be completed in the first quarter of Year Two.

The SWOT assessment tools is embedded below and attached to this report.



## Program Evaluation:

The end of year annual program evaluation report will be submitted 30 days after this report is completed as the data in this report is necessary to complete the report. There is significant program evaluation data available from the intensive and targeted TA provided the first year and this information will be included in the annual program evaluation report.

Our ability to collect comprehensive program evaluation data was developmental in the first six months of the program. When we tried sending electronic evaluations after providing a training by Zoom, there was a very small response rate. When we embedded the evaluation link in the presentation itself, posted it in the chat box near the end of the presentation and then gave participants time at the end of the presentation to complete the evaluation, the response rate was considerably higher. Table 5 includes the results of formal evaluations that include the GPRA measures completed during the first year of the project.

Table 5: Evaluation Results for the GPRA Measures

| **Training and/or TA** | **High Quality** | | **Relevant** | | **Useful** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Idaho Blind Other Measures that Matter | 28 | 98% | 28 | 98% | 28 | 98% |
| Idaho General Other Measures that matter | 85 | 99% | 85 | 99% | 85 | 99% |
| Pennsylvania MSG and Credential training | 1 | 100% | 1 | 100% | 1 | 100% |
| Iowa Blind Eligibility Training | 9 | 100% | 9 | 100% | 9 | 100% |
| Kansas Eligibility Training | 88 | 96% | 87 | 95% | 85 | 92% |
| Wyoming Internal Controls Training | 3 | 100% | 3 | 100% | 3 | 100% |
| Wyoming Eligibility Training | 12 | 92% | 12 | 92% | 11 | 85% |
| Wyoming IPE Training | 10 | 100% | 10 | 100% | 8 | 80% |
| 7 Secrets of Remote Supervision | 156 | 98% | 158 | 100% | 156 | 100% |
| Wyoming Diversity Training | 14 | 78% | 16 | 89% | 16 | 89% |
| California Ethical Boundaries Training | 35 | 100% | 35 | 100% | 35 | 100% |
| Florida General Advancing in Employment Eligibility Determinations | 231 | 94% | 231 | 94% | 231 | 94% |
| California Effective Case Management | 23 | 79% | 26 | 90% | 26 | 90% |
| **Totals** | **695** | **96%** | **701** | **97%** | **694** | **96%** |

# Targeted TA

The requests for targeted TA in the fourth quarter were significant and continue to increase from one quarter to the next. There were over 123 separate targeted TA events providing TA and/or training to more than 900 VR agency staff in the quarter.

## Number of events by type, topic, agency and number served:

In the first year of the project the VRTAC-QM provided targeted TA and/or training to 65 of the 78 VR agencies, or 83% of the total amount of SVRAs. Table 6 summarizes the targeted TA provided during the first year of the project.

Table 6: *Targeted TA in Year One by Quarter*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Targeted TA Totals for Year One by Quarter** | | | | | |
| **Item** | **Q1** | **Q2** | **Q3** | **Q4** | **Totals** |
| Number of Agencies Receiving TA | 26 | 48 | 51 | 54 | **65** |
| Number of TA Events | 31 | 94 | 110 | 123 | **358** |
| Number of VR Staff Receiving TA | 101 | 531 | 1578 | 928 | **3138** |

Table 7 details the targeted TA for the fourth quarter of the first year

Table 7: *Targeted TA and Training during the 4th Quarter of Year One*

| **Agency** | **Request** | **Number Receiving TA** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Alaska Combined | Information and referral on available TA, referral to QE, discussion of CE state level partnerships; | 2 |
| American Samoa | Reporting and Policy Review | 4 |
| Arizona Combined | Fiscal training for DSA Staff; Match, MOE and reallotment for DSA and DSU; | 4 |
| Arkansas Blind | Rate-setting; MSG tracking and reporting; CAP assistance | 6 |
| California Combined | TA on RSA-911 post-exit reporting for Employment Rate and Median Earnings, sharing resources and timelines for exit cohorts, discussing challenges with UI data updates and resubmission of quarterly reports; Rate setting for Coops; Fiscal TA; ethics training; caseload management training | 245 |
| CNMI | Policy review and Q&A on multiple topics; Share of cost for services; Leadership development | 6 |
| Connecticut General | TA on QA and internal controls, targeted reviews for enrollment and achievement of MSGs, and policy/procedure needs and parameters the agency needs to develop for staff; | 2 |
| DC Combined | Pre-ETS fiscal; MSG and credential attainment qualifying programs; Policy review | 5 |
| Delaware General | 511 system question and answers | 1 |
| Florida Blind | MSG reporting | 1 |
| Florida General | Review of data gathering processes and reports; SE policy review; extended services in the IPE | 8 |
| Georgia Combined | Reporting for the PIRL; SRC; TA on the ETA 9169 Annual Performance Report for PY 2020; Effectiveness in serving employers reporting; TA on the Annual Performance report, performance calculations, validating data, calculating funds expended and analyzing data through RSA's quarterly dashboards; | 17 |
| Hawaii Combined | CAP response; contract development and revision in response to monitoring; fiscal Q&A; Prior approval; Resources for training fiscal staff; Contract language revision | 23 |
| Idaho Blind | Training on the other measures that matter | 41 |
| Idaho General | Monitoring review and debrief; 911 report coding and performance indicator calculations; Contract review; On-the-job supports directly paid to employer; Other measures that matter training | 153 |
| Indiana Combined | TA on reporting requirements for secondary education (as a service or not) and the different aspects of in-house, purchased, and comparable services and their reporting parameters and how this intersects with the case management system; Section 511 Q&A | 2 |
| Iowa Blind | Reporting client services, credentials and Measurable Skill Gains, VR process and IPE services; 911 reporting; Eligibility Training | 14 |
| Kansas Combined | Rate setting with Missouri | 5 |
| Kentucky Combined | Monitoring preparation; Monitoring participation; Internal control review; fiscal monitoring; OOS; prior approval and carryover; Rate setting methodologies; Establishment Projects; Out of country tuition; | 72 |
| Maryland Combined | Transition tracking; SWOT analysis data sharing with PSE | 16 |
| Michigan Blind | Transfer of funds between general and blind agencies; SE policy review; TA on MSGs and credential attainment; Short-term basis for SE; Cost allocation; CE sustainability; Staff allocation; | 14 |
| Michigan General | Credential attainment qualifying certificate programs; CE sustainability; MSG calculations; SE fiscal TA | 7 |
| Minnesota Blind | 3rd party financial/budgeting tools; Payment of wages in OJTs-policy development; Credential attainment and MSG reporting IPE requirements | 3 |
| Minnesota General | Program Income transfers to IL | 1 |
| Mississippi Combined | Expedited eligibility; | 1 |
| Missouri General | Rate setting with Kansas; MSG data analysis; Section 511 processes; | 8 |
| Multiple States | Staff training CoP | 30 |
| Multiple States | Monitoring CoP | 32 |
| Nebraska Blind | Policy and procedure review; Allowable SE expenses; staff time and effort reporting | 6 |
| Nebraska General | 911 reporting | 5 |
| Nevada Combined | Strategic planning | 4 |
| New Hampshire Combined | Quality assurance | 1 |
| New Mexico General | Pre-ETS fiscal; IPE development | 2 |
| New York Blind | WIOA Performance Accountability Training; | 75 |
| North Carolina Blind | OJT and MSG definitions and parameters | 5 |
| North Dakota Combined | Policy review related to purchasing equipment and valuing of the equipment | 1 |
| Oklahoma Combined | Sustaining CE | 8 |
| Pennsylvania Combined | Proposal review for coordinator position between VR and ED; TWE in CE; | 8 |
| Rhode Island Combined | DRAAN Training; Managing the 15% reserve | 21 |
| South Carolina General | Policy development review; major policy review and revision; best practice examples on policy sent; IPE and amendment policy revision; SE policy revision; SWOT analysis; Adding an SRC; Public participation requirements | 36 |
| South Carolina Blind | Policy development review | 3 |
| South Dakota General | TA on core program and shared results of MSG/Credentials and if and when they can be documented by multiple programs; Establishment projects | 4 |
| Texas Combined | Policy review | 1 |
| Utah | TA re: case management system, processes, performance indicators related to Credential Attainment. | 1 |
| Vermont General | Data dashboard review and QM practices; | 1 |
| Virgin Islands Combined | Information and referral on available TA; Monitoring results review; | 1 |
| Virginia Blind | SARA | 4 |
| Virginia General | MSG Documentation and what counts towards acceptable credentials; | 1 |
| Washington Blind | MSG documentation; CMS reporting and data capture; SOC code capture and reporting; MTAG | 5 |
| Wisconsin Combined | Eligibility determination and IPE development policy | 4 |
| Wyoming Combined | Fiscal TA and DSA/DSU challenges on fiscal administration of the VR program; contracts and personnel; reallotment and liquidation; Match and carryover; prior approval; low vision and blind consumers; | 18 |
| **Totals = 54 agencies (including multiple listings);  123 targeted TA events (separated by semi-colon in list above)** | | **928** |

A total of 54 SVRAs requested some form of targeted TA during the fourth quarter. This represents an increase of three SVRAs from the third quarter. There were 928 staff that received the TA directly through 123 events. The total number receiving TA dropped by 650 from the previous quarter, but that is due to the 900 people that attended the Florida training in the third quarter. Without that training in the third quarter, there would have been an increase of 250 individuals receiving TA in the fourth quarter.

## Targeted TA of Note:

The targeted TA provided in the fourth quarter followed what is turning into a common pattern. We provide targeted TA in one or more areas for the SVRA, then they request a SWOT and develop an intensive TA agreement. As indicated earlier, we completed SWOT analyses for Florida General, South Carolina General, Washington Blind and Maryland Combined during the fourth quarter. These will all be turning into ITAAs in Year 2. In addition, Hawaii and Nevada are on the cusp, along with Arkansas Blind.

## Communities of Practice:

There are three active communities of practice currently. These include the monitoring CoP, customized employment and supported employment systems CoPs. The monitoring CoP is meeting bimonthly and has proven to be an important avenue for SVRAs to share information about preparing for, going through, or responding to their monitoring.

The goal of the monthly CE CoP is to facilitate the exchange of information between state agencies that supports the improvement of Customized Employment (CE) delivery, sustainability and program evaluation. This CoP offers state agencies the opportunity to share information, progress, challenges and questions with other agencies who are implementing CE in their state.

The CE CoP is lead jointly by VRTAC-QM and Cornell University. VRTAC-QE & NTACT participate on a regular basis to provide TA support. Due to the transition from WINTAC to VRTAC-QM grants, there was a meeting break from Jan-March.

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

The CE CoP met a total of eight times during this performance year. In 2020, those meetings were held on October 28, November 18, and December 16. During 2021, meetings were held on April 28, May 26, June 30, July 28, and September 29.

The following State VR agencies participated: Arizona C., California G., Colorado C., Florida G., Idaho G., Louisiana C., Michigan G. & B., Minnesota G. & B., Missouri G., Montana C., Nevada C., New Jersey G., South Dakota G., Texas C., Utah C., and Virginia G. for a total of 16 VR agencies and 45 VR staff.

A summary of agenda items that were covered for the prior year were:

* Updates from VRTAC-QM, VRTAC QE and NTACT regarding CE support available
* Sharing methods of developing and implementing sustainable CE training
* Strategies to support CE Program Evaluation
* CE resources states are developing to support CE such as CO’s CE Handbook
* Developing and implementing long-term internal & virtual CE training capacity
* Partnering with DD/Medicaid to co-enroll and cover CE cost
* Presenting CE TA support by VRTAC-QE
* Sharing CE policy language from other agencies such as from CO, KY and UT
* Utilization of Integrated Resource Teams as part of CE
* Provider/Staff turn over challenges and related strategies to mitigate

VRTAC-QM collaborated with George Washington University’s Center for Innovative Training in VR (CIT-VR) to help support the continuation of SE CoP meetings initially started under WINTAC in July 2017. CIT-VR is the lead agency in setting up, facilitating and record keeping for these meetings while VRTAC-QM supports these calls especially in the system’s related work. In addition, staff from the VRTAC-QE and subject matter experts from Cornell University participate and provide TA regularly in these calls. Under this new structure, the first meeting was held on 3/19/21 and then, subsequently, on 5/19/21, 7/21/21 and 9/15/21. These meeting will continue every other month on the third Wednesday of that month.

SE CoP membership currently consists of 48 members representing 23 SVRAs, as well as participation by CCER (UW), VRTAC-QE (UW-M), Yan Tang Institute (Cornell).  Currently, the SVRA’s are: Arizona C, Arkansas B, Colorado C, Delaware B, Connecticut G, Hawaii C, Idaho G, Florida G, Kentucky C, Louisiana C, Maryland C, Mississippi G, Minnesota G, Montana C, Nebraska G, New York G, New Jersey G, Missouri G , Oregon G, Pennsylvania C, Utah C, Virginia G, Wisconsin C. In addition, the SE CoP includes an on-line community with 24 members. The online community serves as a venue to share resources and to have discussion threads on particular topics. The community is only open to members of the SE CoP.

**SE CoP Goal:**

The goal is to improve the delivery of SE services in their agencies resulting in better employment outcomes for those they serve. The SE CoP community serves as a forum for an exchange of ideas, innovation and information to assist members identify challenges and solutions in delivering SE services for their consumers that are in alignment with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA 2014, and related sub-regulatory guidance from RSA including addressing pre and post monitoring questions related to SE.

**Topics Included:**

* Sharing specific SE strategies between states to address emerging challenges such as providing more virtual services given the current COVID 19 virus.
* CRP capacity building strategies including addressing provider turnover, quality, training and monitoring of SE services and provider fee structures.
* States sharing providing overviews of how they have structured and are successfully providing SE services.
* Strategies to transition folks from Sheltered Employment to SE/CIE.
* OJTs as a potential service under SE.
* What protocols are in place to verify provision of services by CRPs.
* Strategies related to VR agencies partnering with employers to pay them directly to provide supports and training that a CRP would typically provide.

## Executive Leadership Seminar Series:

The Executive Leadership Seminar Series continues to be an important venue for the provision of TA and training to executive leaders of the VR program across the country. In addition to partially supporting the instructors in the year-long program, the several staff form the VRTAC-QM team present regularly to participants. Each participant completes a year-long group project, much like a capstone project. The four culminating projects this year were as follows:

Why it is imperative that VR agencies keep excellent employees (retention);

Advancing services to individuals with disabilities be re-envisioning VR service delivery;

Putting business services first and the impact it can have on a VR system; and

Staff Development: The future lies within the public VR program.

A new cohort will begin in January of 2022.

## Program Evaluation:

Full program evaluation results will be included in the program evaluation report that will be delivered 30 days after the submission of this report.

# Universal TA

Universal TA for the VRTAC-QM has consisted of tools and training on our website, webinars and social media. We are adding to our website daily and have a staff person responsible for our Social Media presence. There are literally hundreds of resources available on the website and it grows constantly.

## Website Analytics:

| **Overview** | **Counts** |
| --- | --- |
| Unique visitors | 3,829 |
| Page views | 31,378 |
| Visits | 7,974 |
| Returning Visitors | 0.5% |
| New Visitors | 99.5% |
| Pages per Visit | 3.9 |
| Average Duration per Visit | 1m 14s |

**Top 10 Pages Visited**

| **Pages** | **Page Views** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Home | VRTAC-QM | 7,270 | 23% |
| 1. Training Portal | VRTAC-QM | 1,414 | 5% |
| 1. About Us | VRTAC-QM | 1,366 | 4% |
| 1. Program & Performance Quality Management | VRTAC-QM | 1,272 | 4% |
| 1. VR Program Fiscal Management | VRTAC-QM | 1,059 | 3% |
| 1. WIOA Performance Accountability System | VRTAC-QM | 763 | 2% |
| 1. Fiscal & Resource Quality Management | VRTAC-QM | 706 | 2% |
| 1. Program & Performance QM | VRTAC-QM | 674 | 2% |
| 1. What's New | VRTAC-QM | 621 | 2% |
| 1. Mailing List | VRTAC-QM | 617 | 2% |

**Traffic Overview by States – 10 States with Higher Traffic**

| **Region** | **Total users** | **New users** | **Engaged sessions** | **Engagement rate** | **Event count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Virginia | 521 | 508 | 656 | 65% | 7,074 |
| 1. California | 306 | 294 | 577 | 81% | 18,419 |
| 1. Minnesota | 92 | 90 | 346 | 78% | 4,907 |
| 1. South Carolina | 56 | 56 | 274 | 80% | 2,033 |
| 1. Georgia | 49 | 49 | 247 | 76% | 5,946 |
| 1. New York | 213 | 208 | 241 | 81% | 2,631 |
| 1. District of Columbia | 92 | 84 | 208 | 86% | 2,606 |
| 1. North Carolina | 43 | 41 | 171 | 77% | 4,415 |
| 1. Washington | 119 | 118 | 165 | 74% | 1,917 |
| 1. Florida | 152 | 150 | 160 | 67% | 2,169 |

## Universal TA of Note in the 4th Quarter:

1. **Social media stats for the month of July**.  
   **Twitter**: 19 tweets, 1,515 profile visits, 25 new followers, 5 mentions, and 6,225 tweet impressions. We are currently following 494 people and have 72 followers  
   **Facebook**: 54 total page views, 36 new likes, 40 new followers, a post reach of 1,526, and post engagement 496. This page has 79 likes and 90 followers.  
   We highlighted new releases from QM, webinars and information from other partners including OSERS.

**Stats for August:**  
**Twitter**:11 tweets, 4,279 impressions, 164 profile visits, 9 mentions, and 8 new followers  
**Facebook**: 17 page views, post reach 1573, 9 new likes, 13 new followers, 3 posts, 109 engagements

**Social Media presence for September:** We highlight Center activities, highlight SVRA posts, and also highlight critical happenings important to VR. For example, National Deaf Awareness month was in September.   
**Twitter** - 15 Tweets; 3,800 Impressions, 11 New Followers (92 total), 2 Mentions, and 708 Profile visits.   
**Facebook** - 4 posts; 2,360 reach; 147 post engagements; 8 new followers (111 total); 6 new likes (94 total).

1. Carol Pankow led the development and broadcast of several podcasts this year called the Manager Minute. We broadcast five of these in Year One. We have had a total of 512 downloads over 5 podcasts.
2. Through a collaborative effort, a two-part webinar was produced on Pre-Employment Transition Services Strategic Planning: A Collaborative Approach.

## Webinars:

The VRTAC-QM recorded or broadcast 12 webinars in Year One. The topics and enrollment are included below:

* A Systems Approach to Serving Individuals with Significant Disabilities - 570
* Conflict Resolution - 162
* Ethics, Supervision and Technology - 271
* Managing the 15% Reserve (with NTACT:C) - 201
* Non-Delegable Responsibilities and Organizational Structure Unpacked - 102
* Moving from Peer to Supervisor - 176
* The 7 Secrets of Remote Supervision - 560
* The State Rehabilitation Council (4-part series) - 132
* Pre-ETS Flexibilities (with NTAC:C) - 548
* A Sustainable Approach to Providing Customized Employment (with QE) - 259
* Pre-employment transition services strategic planning: A collaborative approach (with NTACT:C) - 130
* Achieving a common understanding of customized employment (with QE) – unknown

**Total webinar enrollment in Year One = 3,111**

## Distribution Lists:

The distribution lists for the VRTAC-QM lunched with the new website. As of 9-30-2021 there were 312 people registered for the following lists:

* Program & Performance QM: 288
* Fiscal & Resource QM: 254
* General QM of Orgs: 256

# Collaboration with other TA Centers

The first year of the project laid the foundation for the VRTAC-QM to collaborate with the VRTAC-QE, the NTACT:C and the CIT-VR centers frequently. Some examples of our collaboration include:

1. Leading and facilitating the TAC collaborative monthly calls;
2. Multiple Webinars developed in partnership with the CIT-VR and NTACT:C including the 7 Secrets of Remote, and Pre-Employment Transition Services Flexibility Regarding the Use of Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Funds.
3. Collaboration with the NTACT:C and VRTAC-QE on multiple SVRAs including Montana, Pennsylvania, Nebraska Blind (OIB as well), Iowa Blind, Michigan General and Blind, South Carolina General, Missouri General and Blind, Florida Blind; South Dakota General and North Carolina Blind.
4. Formal inclusion of the NTACT:C in the ITAA for Kansas and Pennsylvania.

# Special Projects

This section includes information on the progress of our three special projects. Each of these projects made progress in their development in the second quarter.

## Community Reinvestment Act Project:

The CRA Pilot provides a State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVRA) and banking institutions with the necessary information, resources, and technical assistance to enter into a mutually beneficial federal matching partnership.

Completed the Roadmaps for both SVRAs and Banks that provide a written guidance and framework for how to develop, plan and operationalize the CRA pilots. The NDI team made further revisions to a marketing piece to help engage banks with this unique opportunity for CRA credit. During this quarter, the one-pager was shared with several banks including:

Schwab

Wells Fargo

Amalgamated Bank

TD Bank

JPMorgan Chase

At the recommendation of RSA, an application for SVRAs to apply for the funds for the CRA pilot was completed in draft and sent for review to Sarah Clardy. However, there is now discussion from RSA as to whether or not the TACs can vet states through the application process so this is on hold awaiting a response from RSA.

We still do not have responses from RSA to our questions that were submitted April 21, 2021. According to updates from RSA, David Steele is bringing this topic to top leadership to try and get the questions bumped up on OGC’s priority list. One of the questions was whether or not a specific agreement or MOU is needed for a private entity’s donation to an SVRA and what was required to be in such an agreement. Since we are still awaiting a response we have reached out to request copies of any agreements SVRAs may have to use as examples so we can begin drafting a document in preparation of a pilot agreement, recognizing it may need to be revised once we have RSA’s response.

**SVRA Activities**

NDI continues to work with Griffin Hammis Associates on the Community of Practice (CoP) on Self-Employment. The initial CoP Kick Off meeting was held July 23rd with 28 individuals representing 17 SVRAs across the country. Information on the pilot was shared with all CoP members. Two states showed interest in participating, but neither were in need of match at this time. Next CoP meeting will be held October 14th.

Information from RSA on SVRAs relinquished allotment funds was reviewed. Attempts were made to determine which of the states relinquished part, or all, of funds due to lack of match. However, those contacted did not have a match deficit but relinquished for other reasons. We will continue to attempt to determine if any of the states did relinquish for match shortfalls and reach out to them in the future.

**Activities with financial institutions and bank regulators**

Several meeting have occurred with JPMorgan Chase discussing recommendations for involvement in the VR/CRA project. A new approach with Chase is to consider their engagement in this project to support advancement of small business development by people with disabilities. This focus has become an evolving priority at Chase with their staff that focus on support of minority and economically vulnerable populations with particular attention to small business owners who are Black, Latinx, women, veterans and/or disabled.

Meeting has been scheduled for October with Amalgamated Bank, based in New York City with offices in Washington, DC, Chicago and San Francisco. Their chief CRA officer has expressed interest with us to support workforce development activities to advance employment results for people with disabilities. Amalgamated has a long history of social responsibility, is very connected with labor unions and has particular interest in support of economically disadvantaged populations, so we are hopeful that this will lead to a positive outcome. Their CRA officer also shared that she will introduce us to several other banks she feels could have an interest in our pilot project.

NDI continues to solicit advice from bank representatives who serve on the advisory panel to NDI’s Center for Disability Inclusive Community Development, as to best approaches and language to be used to introduce the potential of the pilot for bank participation. A new approach that has been suggested by Chase and TD Bank is for NDI to consider becoming a fiscal intermediary for banks that would simplify the process of a direct financial relationship with an SVRA and state government. This would eliminate the involvement of a bank’s legal team trying to negotiate details related to financial accounting, data collection and meeting a standard of proof related to serving low- and moderate-income (LMI) individuals. Under this scenario, a bank would provide CRA funds to NDI to be used for an SVRA match requirement to draw down federal funds. NDI would have a legal agreement with the SVRA that explains the conditions of the contribution, accounting for the funds and data collection requirements. NDI would also then have an agreement with the bank contributing dollars to support the SVRA that details their intent of the contribution and any specific conditions in the use of the funds. NDI has begun a discussion of this approach with the law firm that does pro bono legal work for NDI. More details will be able to be provided in the next quarter.

Meetings are being scheduled for next quarter to touch base with the three bank regulators (OCC, FDIC, Federal Reserve) to provide them an update on the project and with new Administration leaders now on board to seek their assistance in reaching potential banks to participate in the project.

**Activities with Rehabilitation Services Administration**

We continue to stay in communication with RSA through Sarah Clardy and are still awaiting responses to our questions and the decision of whether or not we can use an application process for the pilots with the SVRAs.

**Questions that remain unanswered:**

Contributions by private entities, per 361.60 (b)(3) are to be deposited in the state agency’s account. Can these funds be initially deposited into another state account (i.e. treasury, the SDA, etc.) and then be transferred to the SVRA account?

361.60 (b)(2)(cc)(ciii) states in part can use the donated funds “Any other purpose under the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, provided the expenditures do not benefit in any way the donor, employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family . . .” Does “in anyway” include IPE vocational rehabilitation services provided to an individual who is an employee in a business with multiple locations and hundreds or thousands of employees?

Banks are by the very nature shares financial or other interests because of loans or other financial dealings with a myriad number of businesses and organizations. Would 361.60 (b) (2) (cc) (ciii) apply to these entities and if so might an SVRA determine and document that an individual, entity or organization shared such a financial interest?

Are there any requirements of contributions by private entities *(other than those identified in 361.60 (b)(2)(cc)(ciii))*; § 361.60 Matching requirements; §361.27 Waiver of statewideness; 361.62 Maintenance of effort requirements; § 200.303 Internal controls; and § 200.306 Cost sharing or matching should VRTAC-QM review?

Can RSA point us to any states with internal controls best practices for contributions by private entities or general non-federal match controls.

Is an agreement or MOU needed for a private entity’s donation to a SVRA and if so what is the required to be in the agreement or MOU?

**Conclusion**

Progress and new relationships have been forged with banks and promotion of the VR/CRA pilots has been significant. While questions from RSA remain unanswered, we continue to forge ahead on the areas of marketing and dissemination of information on the potential of the opportunity of the project and develop as many tools and resources as possible prior to RSA and OCC responses to outstanding questions.

## SARA Project:

During the first year of the project, has built the infrastructure needed to enact the project and has presented to several State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies as potential partners.

Administrative Activities

In this year, SARA conducted the following administrative activities in order to administer the project.

1. Developed a *Project Plan*, which outlines project activities moving forward and a project rationale.
2. Developed a *Template for ITA Agreements*
3. Developed a *Project Synopsis* document
4. Developed an *Agency Involvement Matrix*
5. Developed and edited an *Introductory PowerPoint*
6. Developed and edited a *SARA-TTW Project One Page Synopsis*
7. Developed and edited a *SARA-TTW Project Two Page Synopsis*
8. Developed *Agency Fiscal Projections* based upon researched data
9. Established a *TTW Agency Mapping Protocol*
10. Participated in weekly SARA team meetings to review project progress
11. Participated in bi-weekly VRTAC-QM meetings

Intensive Technical Assistance Activities

During this year, SARA conducted the following ITA related activities:

1. Developed ITA Agreement templates and Agency Involvement Matrix (see above).
2. Developed fiscal modeling for ITA’s (cost savings, reduction of denials, improved productivity)
3. Presented to and discussed the project with the following agencies.
   1. Indiana VR
   2. Montana VR
   3. Nevada VR
   4. Texas VR
   5. Virginia Blind VR
   6. Washington Blind VR
   7. Wisconsin VR

At this time, Montana VR has committed substantial time and resources to developing a potential ITA agreement. We are hopeful to have a signed agreement in early 2022.

Targeted Technical Assistance Activities

During this year, SARA conducted the minimal TTA related activities. Our TTA activities are conditioned upon intensive agreements and the creation of communities of practice around them. We may need to re-evaluate this model moving forward.

Universal Technical Assistance Activities

In this year, SARA conducted the following UTA related activities:

1. Established criteria for Universal Technical Assistance.
2. Met with Cornell Team to discuss obtaining UTA items, types of items, etc.
3. Review and development of a synopsis of Cognosante’s scope of work as the new Ticket to Work Manager.
4. Created a rough draft of TTW Introductory Training.
5. Created a list of links to TTW resources, which will be linked on the website when ready

## Employment First Systems Change Project:

In the first year of the VRTAC-QM, work on the Community Partnerships/Employment First Special Projects has focused in the following states/VR Agencies:

* South Carolina-G: Work in this state has around assisting the agency in developing policy and procedures around Supported and Customized Employment. The focus in these areas is building partnerships with Education as well as the state agency serving the I/DD population. SC-G understands it must build these partnerships to build sustainable employment programs for individuals with the most significant. SC-G has been involved in quasi-legislative group of state agencies and education representatives. This effort has resulted in some training around Customized Employment, however, SC-G recognizes that they must take a leadership role. There is pending Employment First legislation at the state level, this will provide more clarity and direction for SC-G going forward. VRTAC-QM will assist SC-G in building those partnerships that lead to sustainable employment programs
* Montana-C: Similar to SC-G MT-G anticipates pending state legislation formalizing an Employment First philosophy. At this time, MT-G is focused on fiscal and reporting compliance priorities listed on their Intensive TA agreement. It is anticipated that EF activities will ramp up significantly in 2022.

Future Activities

* VRTAC-QM will partner the Colorado Office of Employment First (CO-OEF) in developing a ‘Roadmap’ for the development of Employment First programs. In addition, VRTAC-QM and CO-OEF will develop training materials that coincide with the Roadmap.
* In 2022 VRTAC-QM will increase efforts to identify VR agencies looking to build, develop, or expand their presence/leadership in Employment First Programs.

## Part 2: Significant program outcomes for Year One

Table 8 contains the Year One work plan activities, outcomes and status as of September 30, 2021.

Table 8: *End of Year Report on Work Plan Progress*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **End of Year Annual Report on Work Plan Progress for Year One** | | |
| **Domain: Knowledge Development** | | |
| **Activity** | **Outcome** | **Status** |
| Develop the Cooperative Agreement with RSA | Completed Cooperative Agreement | Complete |
| Establish website | Website launched | Complete |
| Establish VR Wellness Check Tool | Benchmark-QM complete | in-progress |
| **Activity** | **Outcome** | **Status** |
| Survey all SVRAs on QM needs and priorities | Survey completed | Complete |
| Comprehensive Review of quality management program and fiscal strategies and practices | Completed review | Complete |
| Identify gold standard benchmarks for the VR Wellness Check using analytical framework and selection criteria | Benchmarks identified and populated in Benchmark-QM | in-progress |
| **Domain: TA and Training** | | |
| **Activity** | **Outcome** | **Status** |
| Management Concepts grants management training available to all SVRAs | Training is available through the VRTAC-QM website | in-progress |
| QM seminar series training provided for varying levels of managers in the VR program | Leadership training established | Complete |
| Targeted and universal TA is provided to SVRAs on quality program and fiscal management | Delivery of TA using website and other methods | Continuous- Targeted TA provided to 3,138 VR staff in 358 events. More than 10,000 accessed some form of universal TA (website and webinars) |
| Establish CoPs in quality program and fiscal mgmt. | CoPs established and meeting | Continuous - 3 CoPs in Year One active |
| Provide intensive TA and training on quality program and fiscal management | SWOT analysis and ITAA completed for each SVRA | 4 ITAAs completed and 8 SWOTs completed in Year One |
| Conduct the SARA SSA reimbursement pilot projects | Pilot started in 4 SVRAs | 2 agencies in progress |
| Conduct the CRA pilot projects in 4 States | Pilot started in 4 SVRAs | Delayed |
| Conduct the EFSC pilot projects in 4 States | Pilot started in 4 SVRAs | 2 Agencies identified and working |
| **Domain: Coordination and Dissemination** | | |
| **Activity** | **Outcome** | **Status** |
| Establish QM committee | Committee est. and meeting | Complete |
| Collaborate with VRTAC-QE and other TACs to support learning and KD and KT. | Number of TACs and other projects contacted and engaged | Continuous |
| Conference presentations with special focus on Y5 | Completed presentations | Six conference presentations between CSAVR, NCSAB and NCRE |
| **Domain: Program Evaluation** | | |
| **Activity** | **Outcome** | **Status** |
| Ongoing PE using quant. and qual. methods | Completed eval. methods | Ongoing |

The VRTAC-QM has completed or accomplished most of the intended outcomes for Year One except for two areas. The VR Wellness check has not been completed and launched as it is in review by RSA and cannot be finalized until RSA finishes their review.

The Management Concepts training has been delayed as well. RSA’s initial review required us to rethink the course adaptions and have a second review by RSA. This has been completed and we are hoping the launch the first course and program by the end of the second quarter of Year Two.

The progress we made on our program measures and GPRA Measures is included in Table 9 below:

Table 9: *Progress on Program and GPRA Measures*:

| **Measure** | **Target** | | **Actual** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Measure 1: Number of ITAAs signed and in progress during project year. | 3 | | 4 | |
| Project Measure 2: Number of ITAAs completed during the project year | 0 | | 0 | |
| Project Measure 3: Number of SWOT assessments and reports completed | 3 | | 8 | |
| Project Measure 4: Number of SVRA personnel completed the VR grants management certificate program | 270 | | 0 | |
| Project Measure 5: Number of targeted training and TA events provided by the QM and number of participants | Target # of events | Target # of participants | Actual # of events | Actual # of participants |
| NA | 100 | 358 | 3,138 |
| **Measure** | **Target** | | **Actual** | |
| Project Measure 6: Number of universal training and TA deliverables on QM completed and are available to SVRA personnel through publications, webinars, and VRTAC-QM website during the project year | NA | | 359 | |
| Project Measure 7: Number and percentage of VR agency personnel reporting that the training and TA is high in quality, relevant, and useful to their work | **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| NA | 75% | 696 | 96% |
| Project Measure 7a: Intensive TA: Number and percentage of VR agency personnel reporting that the training and TA is high in quality, relevant, and useful to their work | NA | 75% | 92 | 94% |
| Project Measure 7b: Targeted TA: Number and percentage of VR agency personnel reporting that the training and TA is high in quality, relevant, and useful to their work | NA | 75% | 604 | 96% |
| Project Measure 7c: Universal TA: Number and percentage of VR agency personnel reporting that the training and TA is high in quality, relevant, and useful to their work | NA | 75% | 303 | 99% |
| **GPRA Measures** | | | | |
| **Measure** | **Number** | | **Percent** | |
| GPRA Measure a: Number and percentage of participating State VR agencies reporting improved coordination and collaboration with Federal, State, or local organizations as a result of the training and technical assistance | 15 | | 93% | |
| GPRA Measure b: Number and percentage of VR agency personnel reporting that the training and TA is high in quality, relevant, and useful to their work | 696 | | 96% | |
| GPRA Measure c: Of State VR agencies that received training and TA, the percentage change in consumers achieving an employment outcome compared to the prior year | TBD | | TBD | |
| GPRA Measure d: Of State VR agencies that received training and TA, the number and percent of agencies that achieved their negotiated level of performance for the measurable skill gains indicator in the VR Program Year. | 31 | | 84% | |
| GPRA Measure e: The number and percentage of participating State VR agencies that adopt quality management strategies and practices as a result of training and technical assistance provided under this grant. | 58 | | 90% | |

The VRTAC-QM exceeded the GPRA measures identified in our cooperative agreement in all areas for which we have data. We were not able to identify the increase in employment outcomes for agencies we have worked with as we only have baseline information for PY 2020. We will report this information in the Year Two end of year report.

## Part 3: Significant program activities, outputs, products and outcomes anticipated in Year 2:

The VRTAC-QM anticipates that the following activities, outputs, products and outcomes will occur in Year 2:

Completion of at seven more ITAAs;

Launch of the VR Wellness Check tool;

Completion of Management Concepts course development and launch of the training;

Provide targeted and universal TA to multiple SVRAs and personnel;

Develop additional content for the website; and

Continue development of the special projects.

## Part 4: Challenges, opportunities and emerging issues

The challenges for us as a center in Year One include a high demand for fiscal and programmatic TA. The RSA supplement provided resulted in us higher Bill Columbo and Allison Flanagan to join the VRTAC-QM team. Each will bring expertise in these areas to help us meet the demand. Staff turnover in SVRAs, staff retention, the lack of internal controls in the program and fiscal areas, and the capacity SVRAs to handle multiple program improvement efforts continue to be a challenge and an opportunity for us.

## Part 5: COVID-19 Impact

The impact of the pandemic has been on the SVRAs and their consumers. Applications and numbers served are very low compared to pre-pandemic levels due to office closures, and this decrease has ramifications across multiple levels including future funding. The pandemic continues to affect SVRAs and their ability to outreach and engage individuals with disabilities, which has become a focus area for us in our TA and training efforts.

# Section B: Work Plan

The status of work plan activities is detailed in Table 8 above.

# Section C: Budget

There was only one somewhat significant change to the proposed budget. Deborah Greene was originally included in the PE budget. She did not accept the position so we moved Chip Kenney over to that budget at 25% and hired Christa Nieminen on the program TA side. In addition, we hired two staff with the supplement provided by RSA and added resources to our IT department to support the project.