**C. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

**Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:**

**1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;**

OVR maximizes all available resources in collaboration with all partners and agencies in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment. The agency assures that prior to providing an accommodation, auxiliary aid, or service or any vocational rehabilitation services to an eligible individual or to members of an individual’s family, the agency will determine whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available.

The agency will assure that the governor, in consultation with other appropriate agencies, will have in place interagency agreements or other mechanisms for interagency coordination between any appropriate public entity, including the agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act and the state agency with the primary responsibility of providing services and supports for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. This will ensure the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined eligible for home and community based services under a Medicaid waiver, a Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authority related to the State Medicaid Program.

Such agreements shall include the following:

A description of a method for defining the financial responsibility of a public entity for providing such services, and a provision stating the financial responsibility of such public entity for providing such services.

Information specifying the conditions, terms, and procedures under which the office shall be reimbursed by other public entities for providing such services.

Information specifying procedures for resolving interagency disputes under the agreement.

Information specifying policies and procedures for public entities to determine and identify the interagency coordination responsibilities of each public entity to promote the coordination and timely delivery of vocational rehabilitation services (except those services specified in paragraph (5) (D) and in paragraphs (1) through (4) and (14) of Section 103 (a) of the Act.

**Responsibilities of Other Public Entities**

If any public entity other than the office is obligated under Federal or State law, or assigned responsibility under State policy or under regulations set forth in the 1998 Amendments to the Act, to provide or pay for any services that are also considered to be vocational rehabilitation services (other than those specified in paragraph (5) (D) and in paragraphs (1) through (4) and (14) of Section 103 (a), such public entity shall fulfill that obligation or responsibility, either directly or by contract or other arrangement.

If a public entity other than the office fails to provide or pay for the services for an eligible individual, the office shall provide or pay for such services to the individual. The office may claim reimbursement for the services from the public entity that failed to provide or pay for such services. Such public entity shall reimburse the office pursuant to the terms of the interagency agreement or other mechanism described in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, according to the procedures established in such agreement or mechanism pursuant to the established conditions, terms and procedures of reimbursement.

Signed agreements between respective officials of the public entities that outline and identify the responsibilities of each public entity relating to the provision of services shall be in place.

OVR developed collaborative relationships with several agencies and entities within and without the statewide workforce investment system both private and public agencies and programs. OVR works cooperatively with the following agencies to avoid the duplication of services and enhance the service delivery process for consumers.

Veterans Administration for the purpose of providing rehabilitation services including vocational guidance and counseling and job development and placement to veterans with disabilities. Collaboration and coordination of services occur between OVR and the Veterans Administration Rehabilitation and Employment Programs and utilized as a comparable benefit as appropriate.

173 school districts statewide consisting of 1,220 schools inclusive of 25,616 students with IEP’s and 504 Plans that are potentially eligible

Nine special education cooperative networks across the state created to enhance educational opportunities for Kentucky’s children providing technical assistance, training; professional development, specialized services and research.

Department of Behavioral Health, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities through their 14 Regional MH/IDD Boards for supported employment. Each board has multiple locations in their covered counties. In addition, this Department also coordinates statewide efforts to enhance the quality of life and independence to individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder thru the Office of Autism, which was established in 2016.

Kentucky Drug Courts for the purpose of facilitating employment and independence goals of individuals with disabilities. Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services for the purpose of educating consumers about their medical coverage options.

Social Security Administration for the purpose of partnerships on employment incentives through the Ticket to Work and other incentive programs.

Community rehabilitation providers in the provision of employment services.

Kentucky Association of Persons in Supporting Employment First whose mission is to “promote the improvement of Supported Employment services for persons with significant disabilities experiencing barriers to employment through education, advocacy, collaboration, policy change, elimination of barriers, empowerment and community participation”. OVR has a staff person serving on the State APSE board.

Department of Medicaid Services and Department of Community Based Services

Kentuckians who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) benefits and are eligible for the federally funded Employment and Training (E & T) program now receive assistance from Kentucky Career Centers to meet education and employment training needs. Department of Community Based Services-Public Assistance Programs.

Local Ophthalmologists and Optometrists and their respective professional associations in accessing needed services for consumers. Staff attend state conferences, distribute marketing materials and maintain working relationships with local offices and the area ophthalmologists and optometrists (patient referral and services).

American Printing House for the Blind, the world’s largest source for adapted educational and daily living products.

Kentucky School for the Blind, K-12 public school serving Kentucky students who are blind and visually impaired; Short Course program (one to 12 weeks) of specialized instructional is also available to students throughout the school year;

Kentucky School for the Deaf, K-12 public school serving Kentucky students who are deaf and hard of hearing; summer camps focused on employment sectors are also available.

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing which provides leadership, education, advocacy and direct services to eliminate barriers and to meet the social, economic, educational, cultural and intellectual needs of deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.

Kentucky Federation of the Blind an advocacy organization that improves blind people’s lives through advocacy, education, research, technology, and programs encouraging independence and self-confidence. Kentucky American Council of the Blind strives to improve the wellbeing of all blind and visually impaired people by serving as a representative national organization of blind people. Staff are involved through representation at their state and national conventions and representation of this advocacy organization sits on the State Rehabilitation Council.

Local Chambers of Commerce - Staff represent the agency across the state on local chamber organizations.

International Centers specializing in advocacy and services to the foreign born and serve refugees, asylees, and immigrants (Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green).

National and Local Employers in the development of working relationships increasing the number of successful employment outcomes for consumers.

University of Kentucky Human Development Institute is a University Center of Excellence established by federal legislation to promote team-based approaches to provide services for individuals with disabilities and their families. Collaborations with vocational rehabilitation include, the Supported Employment Training Project which conducts training and offers technical assistance for supported employment providers, KentuckyWorks Partnerships in Employment State Systems Change Grant, the Individual Placement and Support Project to assist individuals with behavioral health conditions work at community jobs of their choosing with long term supports available, and Innovative Supports for Autistic Workers which provides training and ongoing technical assistance for working with employees on the autism spectrum to the Workforce Investment Boards’ Business Service Teams and human resources managers across the state.

The Kentucky Employment First Council was created by the Employment First Executive Order in May 2018. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation sits on the 27-member group along with people with disabilities, family members, employers, other state agencies and provider agencies. Employment First is the principal that everyone, including people with significant dishabilles, can work in competitive integrated employment. Kentucky’s Executive order states “…competitive and integrated employment in the community shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who have communicated a desire to become employed.

Other community based organizations such as Health clinics, HUD, Diabetes Foundation, The Lions Club and other community resources for consumers

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) is a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology devices and services to improve the productivity and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Visually Impaired Preschool Services offering service to infants, toddlers, and pre-school students who are visually impaired; and to maximize each child’s developmental potential through direct services, advocacy, and community education

Kentucky Outreach and Information Network (KOIN)- Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services/Department of Public Health planning committee for communication and message distribution to special populations during a public health emergency or other disastrous event.

KY-SPIN is the statewide Parent Training and Information (PTI) center that provides training, information and support to people with all types of disabilities (birth through 26 years old), their parents and families, and the professionals who serve them.

Kentucky Association of Community Employment Services (KACES) for the purpose of increasing services for individuals with disabilities including most significant disabilities and enhancing partnerships with community rehabilitation programs.

Social Security Administration: Information Exchange Agreement to receive data regarding consumers’ work history.

The Office works in coordination with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). A member from SILC sits on the Agency State Rehabilitation Council and, the Older Blind Program Manager, Gay Pannell represents the Agency on the SILC. The agency also supports the SILC with a memorandum of understanding of $65,000 per year. OVR has paid that amount for 2018 and 2019 and will continue to provide support as a good partner. OVR also utilizes a grant of $500,000 from DAIL who supervises the SILC. The agency also seeks to serve blind who are 55 and under. Staff work collaboratively with the Independent Living Centers across the state in the service delivery process for consumers with visual impairments.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center cooperates with the Job Corps Center, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, CVS, and local employers, to implement a smooth referral process for the purposes of enhancing education and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Charles W. McDowell Center and its staff are committed to assisting individuals who are blind and visually impaired achieve their educational, vocational and independent living goals. Training opportunities at the center are designed to promote independence.

Other federal, state, and local agencies related to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities such as the Department of Protection and Advocacy, Department of Probation and Parole, Department of Workers Compensation, Department of Disability Determination.

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board over the past year led a rigorous process to identify challenges that may be limiting the ability of employers, communities and citizens to reach their potential. To address these challenges, there are a series of steps that require a sustained commitment from state and local policymakers along with the support of Kentucky's business community. The KentuckyWorks Collaborative was created in January 2019 by Executive Order to guide the implementation of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board’s strategic plan. The 18 member collaborative includes members from federal agencies, local workforce boards, and employers and stakeholders. The Human Development Institute is representing stakeholders related to disability issues, including vocational rehabilitation. The KentuckyWorks Collaborative will set a common strategic direction, prioritize implementation actions, increase communication among stakeholders, and identify challenges in implementation.

OVR plans activities to improve services in the state for individuals with multiple impairments, including individuals with dual sensory loss. The Central Office administrative functions for these workforce programs are centrally located in Frankfort to assure collaboration among the workforce partners. The Workforce Development Leadership team meets weekly to cover pertinent issues within the department. OVR participates in the ten Workforce local boards throughout the state as well as serving on different committees of those boards.

Kentucky is one of the States participating in the operationalizing WIOA Co-Enrollment Cohort through the Department of Education and the Rehabilitation Services Administration and Department of Labor. All five of the core partners are represented on the team. The group will meet as needed.

For more details regarding the Workforce initiatives in Kentucky see the Strategic Elements Section of this Combined State Plan.

OVR has implemented an information and referral system to ensure that individuals who have disabilities will be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance using appropriate modes of communication, to assist in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment. The office assures the referral of these individuals to other appropriate Federal and State programs if it is unable to serve them.

Appropriate referrals made through the system shall:

Be to the Federal, State or local programs, including programs carried out by other components of the statewide workforce investment system in Kentucky that is best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability; and include, for each of these programs, provision to the individual:

-A notice of the referral by the designated State agency to the agency carrying out the program;

-Information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency carrying out the program; and

-Information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain competitive integrated employment.

All applicants and eligible individuals or, as appropriate, the applicants’ representatives or individuals’ representatives, will be provided information and support services to assist the applicants and individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with Section 102 (d) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1998. The Client Assistance Program is available for additional assistance and advocacy during the entire rehabilitation process.

**2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network (the state program carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998) for making assistive technology (AT) information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age and/or disability, their families, employers and employment service providers, educators, healthcare and social service providers. The KATS network serves Kentucky residents of all ages with disabilities of all types, their families, employers and employment service providers, educators, health care and social service providers, and others seeking information about assistive technology (AT) and accessible information technology. The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is the lead agency for the KATS Network. The KATS Network in turn collaborates with four non-profit organizations to operate assistive technology regional centers to provide assistive technology demonstrations and device loans. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center operates a fifth regional center in collaboration with the KATS Network. The KATS Network also collaborates with the Hear Now Foundation hearing aid program and audiologists around the state to facilitate applications for hearing aids for low—income individuals. In addition, the KATS Network collaborates with several healthcare providers and two universities to refurbish and redistribute used durable medical equipment to individuals who need it. The Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) is a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology devices and services to improve the productivity and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Another program is the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) for individuals. KATLC is programs funded by both private and public money to help Kentuckians with disabilities obtain assistive technology to improve their independence or quality of life.

**3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

In 2018, the USDA Rural Development made available funding to rural Kentucky communities across the Commonwealth for the areas of Infrastructure, Access to E-Connectivity/Broadband, Resources for Opioid Crisis, Business, Essential Services and Access to Health Care and Education. Agency staff are aware of these programs and provide information and referral to consumers for these programs to meet their individual needs. As of 2019, the USDA has opened an application portal for a new ReConnect Rural Broadband Infrastructure Program. They have also made investments to improve Rural Electric Infrastructure and Finance Smart Grid technologies. They have also prioritized investments in Telemedicine to address the opioid crisis. The University of Kentucky AgrAbility Program exists for the purpose of collaboration with the county extension offices and increased services in rehabilitation technology on the rural farm setting.

**4. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

OVR serves out-of-school youth such as high school non-completers, students expelled from school or habitually truant, high school graduates and GED holders who are basic skills deficient, unemployed or underemployed, as well as those enrolled in postsecondary education. This is an area identified to increase outreach and strengthen those existing relationships in order to reach and engage on a higher level out-of-school youth.

In Kentucky, the vocational rehabilitation agency is fully integrated into the Kentucky Career Centers. This has strengthened our relationships with the other core programs of the workforce development system. OVR works collaboratively with the following additional agencies and groups of individuals.

Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems. Juvenile Justice is responsible for prevention programs for at-risk-youth, court intake, pre-trial detention, residential placement/treatment services, probation, community aftercare/reintegration programs and youth awaiting adult placement or court.

Faith-based Organization (i.e. churches, Jewish Family Services, health clinics).

Community organizations like Big Brothers, Big Sisters and other community based organizations.

Service Organizations (i.e. Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks)

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services that administers foster care and the division of family support (Medicaid, Foster Care and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Employers-staff in the Employer Services Branch will work with employers

Kentucky Youth Career Center offices are located in Jefferson, Bullitt, and Shelby Counties, and administered by Kentuckiana Works, the region’s Workforce Development Board. Overseeing and coordinating programs in the community for youth ages 16 - 21, the Youth Career Centers offer innovative education, employment and youth empowerment services. The Kentucky Youth Career Center offers resume and interview preparation assistance, GED tutoring and help with testing fees, help applying to colleges and job-training programs, and financial assistance for college and job training. Depending on the need, referrals are made to other community services such as housing, transportation, food, and physical or mental health services. The Kentucky Youth Career Center also creates engagement opportunities with employers through internship and summer job programs, and fosters connections to mentors as well as other youth, and provides an ongoing series of workshops on life-enhancing topics.

**5. State use contracting programs.**

Under the state procurement code, administered by the Finance and Administration Cabinet, there are preferences to be given by governmental entities and political subdivisions in purchasing commodities or services from specified entities. Specifically, first preference is given to the products made by the Department of Corrections and Division of Prison Industries. Second preference shall be given either to: (1) the Kentucky Industries for the Blind or any other nonprofit corporation (2) qualified nonprofit agencies for individuals with severe disabilities i.e., Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP). This means that state and local governmental agencies are to purchase directly from Correctional Industries or an Industries contracted with by OVR and/or a CRP without having to utilize the competitive procurement processes.